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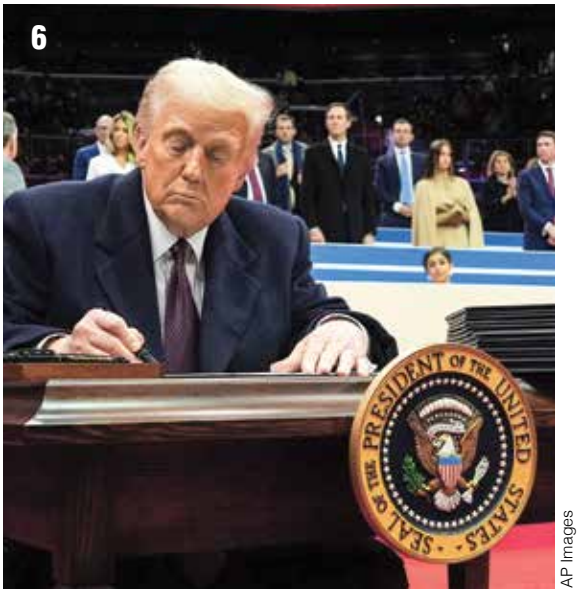

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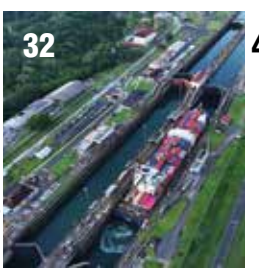

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Publisher
Steve Bonta

Editor-in-Chief
Gary Benoit

Managing Editor
John T. Larabell

Senior Editors
Paul Dragu • William F. Jasper
Alex Newman • Rebecca Terrell

Copy Editor
Liana Stanley

Contributors
Dennis Behreandt • Steve Byas
D. Michael DeRidder
Selwyn Duke • Brian Farmer
Christian Gomez • William P. Hoar
R. Cort Kirkwood • Veronika Kyrylenko
Annalisa Pesek • Dr. Duke Pesta
Peter Rykowski • Michael Tennant
Fr. James Thornton • Laurence M. Vance
Joe Wolverton II, J.D.

Creative Director
Joseph W. Kelly

Art Director
Katie Bradley

Graphic Designers
Lindsey McConnell
Jacob Vang

Advertising/Circulation Manager
Julie DuFrane

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920-749-3784
www.thenewamerican.com
editorial@thenewamerican.com

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Best of Times, Worst of Times

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." So begins Charles Dickens' epic historical novel *A Tale of Two Cities*, set before and during the French Revolution.

Undoubtedly many of our readers will find the novel's first six words apropos to the way President Donald Trump seems to have single-handedly turned his predecessor's policies upside down during his first few days back in office. For instance, on his first day he pardoned more than 1,500 J6ers who were vilified and prosecuted by the Biden Justice Department. Later the same week, he pardoned 23 pro-lifers who were prosecuted for peacefully blocking access to abortion chambers.

Trump has also taken executive action to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate agreement and the World Health Organization. He has ordered the release of all JFK, RFK, and MLK assassination files. He has also ordered the end of discriminatory DEI policies. He has reinstated the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits federal funding of abortion, and the Mexico City Policy, which prohibits U.S. aid to foreign organizations that perform or promote abortions.

The list goes on.

There is much to celebrate in what Trump has already done. What else will he do over the next four years? Many have high hopes! But many also recognize — as we do here at *The New American* — that the *second* clause in Dickens' novel — "it was the worst of times" — is as applicable as the first clause to our own tumultuous times in America.

Consider the abortion holocaust. In 2023, more than one million abortions were performed in the United States, according to the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute, despite the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* the previous year. In fact, according to Guttmacher, the number of abortions has actually trended upward since the demise of *Roe*. How can this be? One reason not to be overlooked is how many "pro-life" politicians — including Trump — have opposed abortion based on an *exceptions* policy. For example, they'll oppose abortion *except* for the first six or 12 weeks of pregnancy. Of course, such an exception undermines the fact that human life is sacrosanct. If it is morally permissible to kill a preborn baby up to six or 12 weeks after conception, why not up to 20 weeks, or even the time of birth?

Consider, too, the national debt, which is now over $36 trillion and climbing. This massive indebtedness is a result of massive spending. And most of the spending is for unconstitutional programs. Trump has launched a Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to cut costs by making the federal government more efficient, but the underlying cause of ballooning spending is the myriad things the government is doing that it should not be doing. Efficient socialism is not the answer! Nor is the answer to "get rid of, or extend out to, perhaps, 2029, the ridiculous Debt Ceiling," as Trump put it on Truth Social last December.

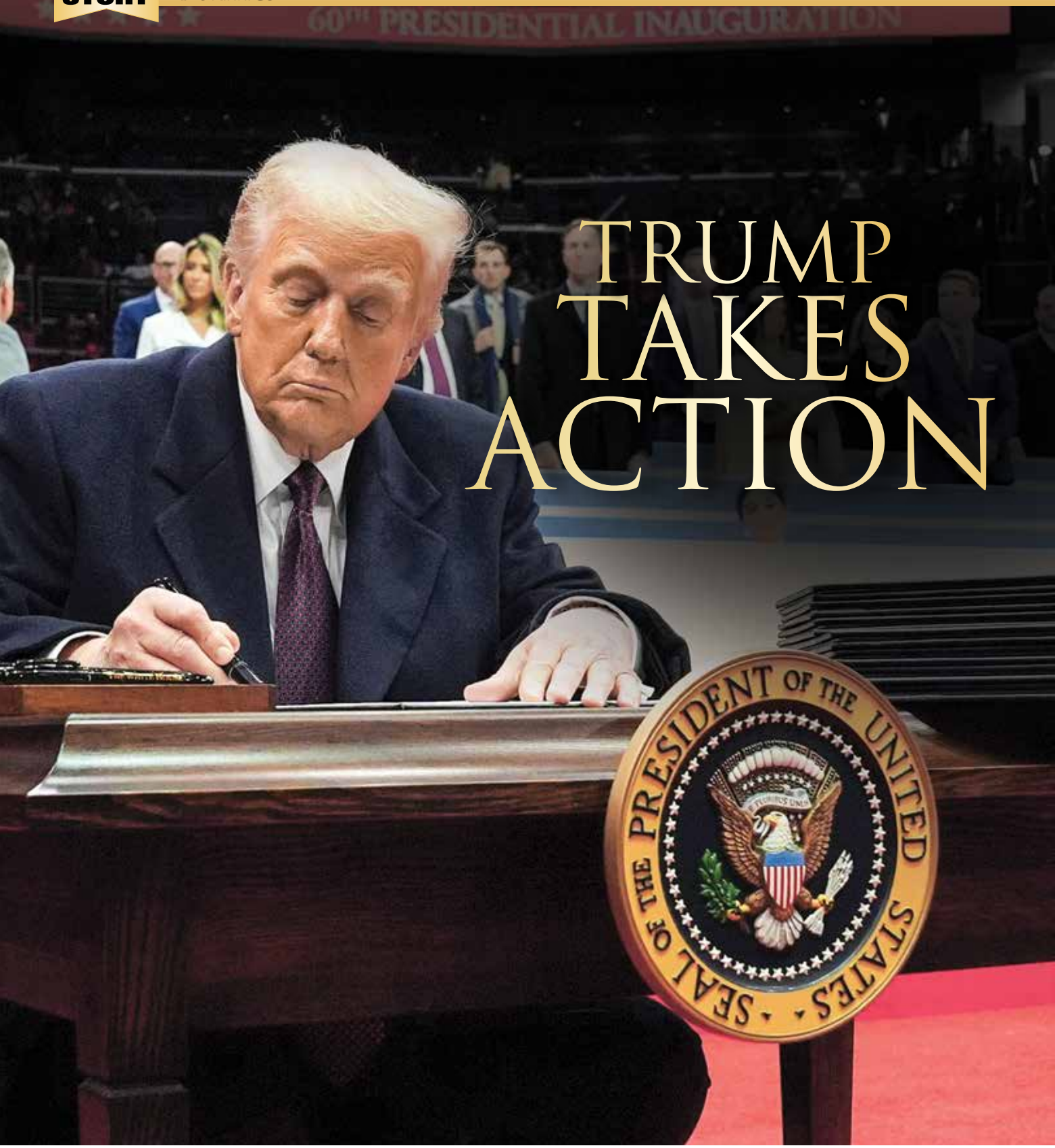
Finally, consider that no president could possibly hope to get America back on the right course by himself, even if he were to do all the right (i.e., constitutional) things. Under the U.S. Constitution, *all* legislative powers delegated to the national government belong to the Congress. A president may constitutionally take executive action to negate an unconstitutional executive order by a prior president, but he may not make law by executive decree.

Our Constitution is routinely transgressed by neoconservative Republicans and liberal Democrats alike. But it is still the law of the land, and this provides hope that good government can be restored as soon as it is enforced. However, this will not happen without creating sufficient understanding, not just among elected officials, but, even more importantly, among "We the people" who vote those officials into power.

The opportunity is here, and so is the threat. America is at a crossroads, and with apologies to Dickens, "It *is* the best of times, it is the worst of times."

— Gary Benoit

CORRECTION: "Rebirth of the Nation" in our January 27 issue incorrectly stated that a graduated income tax is the 10th plank in *The Communist Manifesto*. It is the second of 10 planks.



TRUMP TAKES ACTION

In a series of executive orders signed over the first few days of his second term in office, President Trump delivered on most of the promises he made to the American people.

by R. Cort Kirkwood

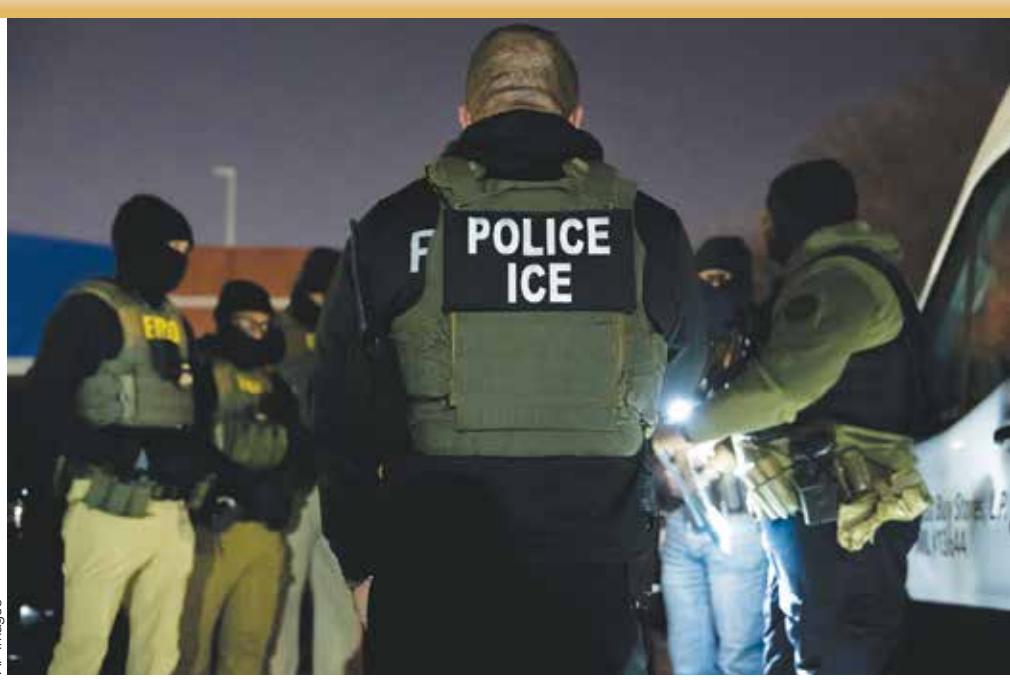
After the first week of the new Trump administration, listing what he didn't do would have been easier than listing what he did. He didn't curb the rising national debt. He didn't fully restore constitutional government. He didn't bring the troops home from the far-flung outposts of the American Empire. But what President Donald Trump did is nevertheless impressive and outstanding, not least because he kept many of his campaign promises to end the anti-Christian, anti-American, anti-common-sense madness of the last four years.

Most importantly, vis-à-vis national security, the federal government's primordial duty, he immediately moved to close the Southwest border and stop the illegal-alien invasion aided, abetted, and invited by former President Joe Biden. Trump deployed 1,500 U.S. Marines and soldiers to the border to back up the besieged Border Patrol.

He declared that the government will recognize only two sexes, not a panoply of "genders"; pardoned the January 6 and pro-life protesters whom the weaponized Justice Department imprisoned; withdrew the United States from the Paris climate accord; and ordered the release of the assassination files of President John F. Kennedy, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

And during his inauguration, he vowed that the United States would take back the Panama Canal.

Not bad for the first few days in office.



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Enforcing the law: President Donald Trump signed myriad executive orders the day he took the presidential oath, the most important concerning immigration. Trump closed the border, began summary deportations and rounding up illegal-alien criminals, and declared the border drug- and human-smuggling cartels terrorist organizations.

Immigration, National Security

Trump's most pressing and significant first order was closing the Southwest border with Mexico and beginning mass deportations, beginning with the illegal-alien criminals whom Biden turned loose upon Americans with unlawful programs that released illegals into the United States.

Border Patrol agents have encountered more than 10 million illegals at the nation's borders since Biden took office, the vast majority at the frontier with Mexico. Rapists, murderers, and other criminals were caught and released, a move that ended in the deaths of women such as Laken Riley. A new criminal gang, Venezuela's Tren de Aragua (TdA), established a beachhead in several major U.S. cities, and took over at least one motel and several apartment complexes in two states.

Such was the danger of Biden's policies that the U.S. House impeached his Homeland Security secretary, Alejandro Mayorkas, a Cuban immigrant.

Trump stopped the invasion at the border with multiple executive orders on Day 1.

"America's sovereignty is under attack," Trump said in declaring a national emergency at the Southwest border: "Our southern border is overrun by cartels, criminal gangs, known terrorists, human traffickers, smugglers, unvetted military-age males from foreign adversaries, and illicit narcotics that harm Americans."

Trump also declared the drug cartels that virtually control some areas of the border to be terrorist organizations, including TdA and the feral MS-13 gang from El Salvador.

He stopped refugee admissions until they are realigned with American interests, and suspended the admission of aliens until he declares that the Biden-sponsored invasion is over. Immigration and Customs Enforcement began deporting illegals from the interior, and shortly thereafter, summary deportations began. He ended Biden's attempt to import the Third World through an illegal "parole" program and with a smartphone app created by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Perhaps mostly importantly, Trump ordered the military's U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) to "to seal the borders and maintain the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security of the United States by repelling forms of invasion including unlawful mass migration, narcotics trafficking, human smuggling and trafficking, and other criminal activities."

Thus did USNORTHCOM dispatch 1,000 Army and 500 Marine Corps military police and combat engineers to the border. Joining them, news reports said, would be elements of the 82nd Airborne and 10th Mountain divisions.

Within days of Trump's taking office, illegal-alien encounters at the border had dropped to less than 1,000 per day, and as this edition of *The New American* went to press, the number of arrests of illegal-alien rapists, pedophiles, and murderers approached 3,000. Deportation flights began on January 24 — just four days after Trump took the oath of office.

Many illegal aliens began self-deporting and leaving the country.

R. Cort Kirkwood is a longtime contributor to The New American. *He was a newspaperman for more than 25 years.*

Perhaps most importantly, Trump ordered an end to birthright citizenship, which permits foreigners to travel to the United States to drop "anchor babies" who are citizens. That's called *birth tourism*, a trade in which the Chinese have become experts. The same is true for illegal aliens and the Biden "migrants" the former president invited into the country. Once they have a child, deporting the parents becomes next to impossible.

Trump's order invited lawsuits from the usual leftist, open-borders lawfare organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union.

DEI, "Civil Rights," Gender Madness End

In keeping with his promise to end the woke ideology of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), along with "civil rights" and "transgender" mandates — with which Biden waterboarded Americans from Day 1 of his disastrous presidency — Trump also upended those initiatives.

Most importantly, Trump overturned presidential orders dating to 1965 that supposedly protected "civil rights." In fact, they undermined those rights by discriminating against whites. Trump rescinded President Lyndon Johnson's executive order mandating "affirmative action" among federal contractors. He nixed similar orders from presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton.

"Longstanding Federal civil-rights laws protect individual Americans from discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin," says the order, called "Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-based Opportunity":

> These civil-rights protections serve as a bedrock supporting equality of opportunity for all Americans. As President, I have a solemn duty to ensure that these laws are enforced for the benefit of all Americans.
>
> Yet today, roughly 60 years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, critical and influential institutions of American society, including the Federal Government, major corporations, financial institutions, the medical industry, large commercial airlines, law enforcement agencies, and institutions of higher education have adopted and actively use dangerous, demeaning, and immoral race- and sex-based preferences under the guise of so-called "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI) or "diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility" (DEIA) that can violate the civil-rights laws of this Nation.

Male and female: In another executive order, Trump declared that the government will recognize two biological sexes, and that "gender identity" is a fiction.

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Trump ended all federal DEI policies and programs, and placed all federal DEI employees on leave. He also terminated all DEI training and ended all DEI contracts.

He stopped the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs from promoting "diversity," "holding Federal contractors and subcontractors responsible for taking 'affirmative action,'" and urging them to fret about "race, color, sex, sexual preference, religion, or national origin" in hiring.

As far as "gender" and "transgender" lunacy goes, Trump declared that "it is the policy of the United States to recognize two sexes, male and female." Title of the order: "Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government."

The order defined men and boys as men and boys and women and girls as women and girls.

It also destroyed the notion that human beings have a "gender identity" apart from their biological sex:

> "Gender ideology" replaces the biological category of sex with an ever-shifting concept of self-assessed gender identity, permitting the false claim that males can identify as and thus become women and vice versa, and requiring all institutions of society to regard this false claim as true.
>
> Gender ideology includes the idea that there is a vast spectrum of genders that are disconnected from one's sex. Gender ideology is internally inconsistent, in that it diminishes sex as an identifiable or useful category but nevertheless maintains that it is possible for a person to be born in the wrong sexed body.
>
> "Gender identity" reflects a fully internal and subjective sense of self, disconnected from biological reality and sex and existing on an infinite continuum, that does not provide a meaningful basis for identification and cannot be recognized as a replacement for sex.

The Rule of Law, No Tax Money for Abortions Here or Abroad

As important as returning common sense and biological reality to the federal government is, equally important is

that Trump stood up for the rule of law.

In what he called the beginning of a "national reconciliation," he pardoned or commuted the prison sentences of some 1,500 Americans prosecuted for joining in the mostly peaceful protest about the 2020 election at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. The attorney general will dismiss any ongoing cases against those defendants.

Trump also pardoned pro-life activists convicted of breaking the law under the unconstitutional FACE (Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances) Act.

Signed by President Bill Clinton, who once said abortion should be "safe, legal, and rare," the law was used by the Biden administration to prosecute protesters who lawfully exercised their First Amendment-protected right to peacefully protest outside abortion clinics.

Observed the Thomas More Society, which sought the pardons, the Biden administration weaponized the FACE Act to prosecute the defendants selectively. First, it overcharged the protesters with felonies for infractions that were at most misdemeanors. Second, Biden prosecuted the pro-lifers but prosecuted no one for the hundreds of acts of violence against pregnancy centers and churches, which are also covered by the law, after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision. In one case, the jury was rigged, Thomas More noted. One of those pardoned is 76-year-old Joan Bell, who was arrested in May 2024 for praying outside an abortion clinic.

The pardons struck a blow against the weaponization of federal law not only against targets such as the mostly peaceful J6 protesters, but also the Joan Bells of this nation who were arrested for protesting the mass slaughter of unborn children.

"The American people have witnessed the previous administration engage in a systematic campaign against its perceived political opponents, weaponizing the legal force of numerous Federal law enforcement agencies and the Intelligence Community against those perceived political opponents in the form of investigations, prosecutions, civil enforcement actions, and other related actions," Trump said in the order called "Ending the Weaponization of the Federal Government."

Those unconstitutional actions, not least threatening and vilifying as terrorists parents who spoke out at school-board meetings, were meant to inflict "political pain."

AP Images

Get us out: Trump withdrew the United States from the World Health Organization and Paris climate accord on Day 1 of his presidency because membership does not serve the interests of the United States.

The Biden administration and its far-left allies across the nation "engaged in an unprecedented, third-world weaponization of prosecutorial power to upend the democratic process," the order explained:

> It targeted individuals who voiced opposition to the prior administration's policies with numerous Federal investigations and politically motivated funding revocations, which cost Americans access to needed services. The Department of Justice even jailed an individual for posting a political meme.… The Department of Justice has ruthlessly prosecuted more than 1,500 individuals associated with January 6, and simultaneously dropped nearly all cases against [Black Lives Matter] rioters.

No More WHO or Paris Climate Accord

Trump also signed executive orders to protect American taxpayers from predatory freeloading nations and their janissaries in anti-American global organizations.

The United States quit the World Health Organization (WHO), Trump said, for "mishandling" the China Virus, for failing "to adopt urgently needed reforms," and for becoming captive to the political influence of member nations. As well, "WHO continues to demand unfairly onerous payments from the United States, far out of proportion with other countries' assessed payments. China, with a population of 1.4 billion, has 300 percent of the population of the United States, yet contributes nearly 90 percent less to the WHO."

Recall that the WHO refused to blame China for the Covid-19 virus, despite knowing the Asiatic microbe swept the globe after it escaped from a lab in Wuhan. That lab was conducting gain-of-function research — illegally subsidized with U.S. tax dollars — on bat viruses.

Likewise, Trump ditched the anti-American Paris climate accord, one of many "international agreements and initiatives that do not reflect our country's values or our contributions to the pursuit of economic and environmental objectives," he said.

As well, those agreements pump money into nations that "do not require, or merit, financial assistance in the interests of the American people."

In dropping out of the accord, Trump said his job is "to put the interests of the United States and the American people first in the development and negotiation of any international agreements with the potential to damage or stifle the American economy." And "agreements must not un-

AP Images

Release the files: Keeping yet another promise, Trump ordered the release of the assassination files of President John F. Kennedy, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, and "civil rights" leader Martin Luther King, Jr.

duly or unfairly burden the United States."

In almost every case, Americans gain little from these pacts, treaties, and agreements other than a massive bill to pay, while the rest of the signatories freeload.

Example: the United Nations, which Trump should abandon next.

Trump also paused foreign aid for 90 days because the U.S. "foreign aid industry and bureaucracy are not aligned with American interests and in many cases [are] antithetical to American values." The foreign-aid industrial complex does little more than "destabilize world peace." No more free money will rocket around the globe unless disbursing it is "fully aligned with the foreign policy of the President of the United States."

JFK, RFK, MLK Files

Trump also followed through on his vow to release the John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, Sr., and Martin Luther King, Jr. assassination files.

"I have now determined that the continued redaction and withholding of information from records pertaining to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy is not consistent with the public interest and the release of these records is long overdue," Trump said:

> And although no Act of Congress directs the release of information pertaining to the assassinations of Senator Robert F. Kennedy and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I have determined that the release of all records in the Federal Government's possession pertaining to each of those assassinations is also in the public interest.

Unclear is whether the released MLK files will include those held by the National Archives until 2027. A judge sealed the records in 1977 pursuant to a lawsuit filed by the discredited hate group Southern Poverty Law Center.

Those files likely contain more information about King's deviant and "unnatural" sexual practices, including his being an accomplice in a rape, than the files already available to the public.

Security Clearances Revoked

In another blow against the Deep State, Trump rescinded the security clearances of the 51 former intelligence officials who falsely claimed that Hunter Biden's notorious laptop, uncovered by the *New York Post* in October 2020, was "Russian disinformation." The far-left, pro-Biden media, notably *Politico*, ran with that lie, and during his third debate with Trump, President Joe Biden used it to claim the laptop story was disinformation.

The 51 officials, including James Clapper, former director of national intelligence, and communist John Brenner, former CIA director, said the laptop "has all the classic earmarks of a Russian information operation." Unfortunately for them, the laptop was not disinformation, as Hunter himself confirmed in a lawsuit filed against former Trump aide Rudy Giuliani in 2023.

Also losing a security clearance is neoconservative armchair warrior John Bolton.

Panama Canal

During his inauguration speech before the slowly burning Establishment apparatchiks seated behind and around him, Trump delivered his promises and objectives with characteristic brio.

He also implicitly reasserted the Monroe Doctrine: A foreign power will have no influence in the Western Hemisphere. The imprudent and illegal Panama Canal Treaties are null and void. "We have been treated very badly from this foolish gift that should have never been made and Panama's promise to us has been broken," he said. "The purpose of our deal and the spirit of our treaty has been totally violated."

"American ships are being severely overcharged and not treated fairly in any way, shape, or form. And that includes the United States Navy," Trump continued. "And above all, China is operating the Panama Canal, and we didn't give it to China, we gave it to Panama. And we're taking it back."

Again, not bad for the first several days on the job. ■

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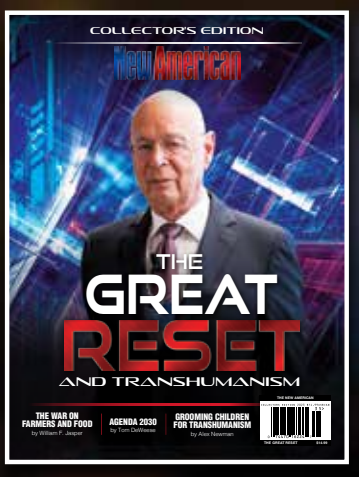

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WHAT THEY SAID

Compiled by William F. Jasper

The following remarks about the January 6, 2021 protest at the U.S. Capitol were made during the Biden administration.

Joachim/Adobe Stock

Gage Skidmore

"This wasn't a group of tourists. This was an armed insurrection."

— President Joe Biden

"The President of the United States [Donald Trump] incited this insurrection, this armed rebellion, against our common country. He must go. He is a clear and present danger to the nation that we all love."

— House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.)

"Every American must be assured that no lie, conspiracy theory, or armed group of white supremacists has the power to impair the government they freely and fairly elected."

— Representative Cori Bush (D-Mo.)

"The deeply disturbing events that occurred at our nation's Capitol on January 6th were sedition, treason, and domestic terrorism — and those individuals involved in the insurrection must be held accountable for attempting to subvert our democratic process."

— Florida Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried

"Yesterday, an armed mob, at the behest of President Donald Trump, stormed the Capitol with guns, homemade bombs, and chemical weapons while the entire Congress gathered to certify the election results. This was an act of domestic terrorism and a grave assault on our democracy. We must move quickly to hold this President and his enablers, including those in Congress, accountable for these treasonous acts."

— Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.)

"We saw what happened. It was a violent insurrection for the purpose of trying to prevent the peaceful transfer of power after a legitimately certified election, from one administration to the next. That's what it was."

— Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.)

"January 6 was an attempt to reverse, through violent means, the outcome of a free and fair election. An insurrection. Call it what it is."

— Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.)

"Probably most of the people who were at the Capitol that day and have been arrested were [simply] people who went into the building. Sometimes they were absolutely ushered in by the cops. They walked in. They broke nothing. They hurt no one. They took some selfies. They did a livestream, and they walked out. There are a lot of those people."

— *New York Times* reporter Alan Feuer

Don Neuen

Thumbs up: Former Florida Oath Keepers chief Kelly Meggs gives a big thumbs up on his first day of freedom. He had served four years of a 12-year sentence.

J6 PARDONS
ENDING AN INJUSTICE

President Trump's pardoning of the January 6 prisoners ends the "grave national injustice" committed by Democrats and others on the Left during Biden's term in office.

by William F. Jasper & Rebecca Terrell

January 20 is our country's new Independence Day. After endless hours of incessant inauguration festivities, sycophantic speeches, and ceremonial signings that evening, President Donald J. Trump made his way to the White House, where he issued pardons for those he accurately called "hostages."

"So this is January 6, and these are the hostages," he said, opening one of the portfolios stacked in the Oval Office. "Approximately 1,500 for a pardon — full pardon."

One by one phones started ringing — the phones of nail-biting friends and families across the country who had been waiting for this moment for four years.

"Are you out?"

"I will be in an hour."

"On my way."

That was the gist of my conversation at 12:58 a.m., January 21. A friend of mine and I (Rebecca) jumped in our cars and rushed to the federal prison in Memphis, Tennessee. We were scheduled to pick up three J6ers and keep them safe and warm until their families arrived.

We waited outside in swirling snow and single-digit temperatures; a guard had stopped us at the door to say we couldn't enter the building because it was "after hours." Excitement kept us warm until we saw them trudging out — one in a short-sleeved shirt. My companion broke into a spontaneous, "OH SAY, CAN YOU SEEEEE!" and we all joined in. We may not have been Carrie Underwoods, but no one ever sang the national anthem with more heart than those three men in their first moments of freedom.

One of my passengers was Kelly Meggs, former leader of the Florida Oath Keepers and one of the 14 who did not receive pardons. Instead, their sentences were commuted. The president's proclamation does not explain why, but Meggs pointed out

William F. Jasper and Rebecca Terrell are senior editors of The New American.

Cliff Rhodes

Celebrating freedom: J6ers Marcus "Green Hand" Martin, Kelly "Gator" Meggs, and Joe "Pi" Thomas sing the national anthem and celebrate reunions with family in the wee hours of January 21.

that the 14 are co-defendants with Trump in a civil suit. He is hopeful that they will all be exonerated and pardoned soon. Trump did promise on inauguration night that their cases would be reviewed.

Regardless, he ordered the immediate release of all J6ers held in prison and, except for the 14, a "full, complete, and unconditional pardon." For those still held in the Washington, D.C., jail (aka "The D.C. Gulag") without trial, he mandated the dismissal of all charges and release of all inmates. As if anticipating mainstream backlash, he wrote: "This proclamation ends a grave national injustice that has been perpetrated upon the American people over the last four years and begins a process of national reconciliation."

It will be an uphill battle. For four years, Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, Democratic politicians, and their Big Media enablers have tried mightily to keep America obsessively focused on the January 6, 2021 Capitol rally. They insist it is representative of a continuing existential threat to "our democracy." Referring to the event in his second State of the Union address in 2023, President Biden claimed that "two years ago, our democracy faced its greatest threat since the Civil War." In his 2024 State of the Union address, Biden's speechwriters had the mentally challenged occupant of the White House once again railing that "January 6 and the lies about the 2020 election, and the plots to steal the election, posed the gravest threat to our democracy since the Civil War." Really? The American Civil War resulted in around 700,000 deaths and widespread destruction of both urban and rural areas, not to mention unprecedented and ongoing social and political turmoil. The January 6 riot, by contrast, resulted in two dead: Ashli Babbitt, a pro-Trump U.S. Air Force veteran who was shot by Capitol Police Officer Michael Byrd; and Roseanne Boyland, a pro-Trump demonstrator whom the Washington, D.C., medical examiner ruled died of accidental overdose of a prescription drug. Two additional Trump supporters, Benjamin Philips and Kevin Greeson, reportedly died of heart attacks. Neither one had gone inside the Capitol.

Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick died from a stroke *the day after the riot*. Representative Jamie Raskin (D-Md.), the radical leftist who served as House manager in President Donald Trump's second impeachment trial, claimed that Officer Sicknick had been murdered by Trump supporters. "The insurrectionists killed a Capitol Police officer by striking him in the head with a fire extinguisher," Raskin said, reinforcing the same false story that was repeated endlessly by the Fake News media machine. Capitol Police Officer Howard Liebengood and Metropolitan Police Officer Jeffrey Smith died by suicide days after January 6. All of these deaths are tragic, but — the equivalent of the Civil War? To quote Joe Biden: "C'mon man!"

However, the anti-Trump fright peddlers are not the least bit embarrassed by the obvious hyperbole. In fact, they insist that the January 6 fracas was also worse than or comparable to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (2,403 Americans dead and 1,143 wounded) and the 9/11 terrorist attacks (2,996 dead, more than 6,000 injured).

You see, it is not the death toll that's at issue here, say the J6 fearmongers, even though they tried to fabricate, exaggerate, and misrepresent the J6 death toll for all they could squeeze out of it. Rather, they now say, it's the violent attempt to subvert "our democracy" and overthrow the legitimately elected government that makes the events of January 6, 2021 so heinous. It was an attempted "coup," an "insurrection," a "conspiracy" orchestrated by Donald Trump, the arch-conspirator.

"Trump Conspiracy" or "Fedsurrection"?

Before the day had even ended, the usual media cabal jumped into action to echo the charges of President Joe Biden, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), and others that the nation was in a death struggle with "insurrectionists." "The president of the United States [Donald Trump] incited this insurrection, this armed rebellion against our common country," Pelosi declared. "He must go. He is a clear and present danger to the nation that we all love." As if singing from the same sheet music, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, The Associated Press, PBS, NPR, CNN, CBS, MSNBC, et al., all warbled in unison the new insurrection theme, a theme they have repeated

like a mantra for four years. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) hysterically asserted that "an armed mob, at the behest of President Donald Trump, stormed the Capitol with guns, homemade bombs, and chemical weapons."

Armed mob? As we have pointed out in previous articles, federal prosecutors have provided no evidence that the Capitol protesters were "armed," in any usual sense of the term. No guns. No bombs. And no "chemical weapons" other than a few examples of pepper spray. Sorry, Representative Schakowsky, no need for histrionics. Yes, some rioters used flagpoles, flashlights, fire extinguishers, and other objects as weapons. But, really, does this rise to the level of an "armed rebellion," an "insurrection"? As critics have noted, this would be the first insurrection in history in which the insurrectionists came unarmed — as if MAGA patriots don't own guns and wouldn't have brought them if "armed rebellion" was their intent, as Madame Pelosi charged.

There is no question that *some* of the J6 rallygoers went feral and crossed over the line from First Amendment-protected free speech and assembly activity into criminal behavior. However, as we point out in our article beginning on page 17, there is good reason to believe that key actors in those criminal acts were operatives of the federal government, and that their sole purpose for being there was to generate a chaotic melee that would advance the "insurrection" narrative to provide the justification for prosecuting Trump and demonizing MAGA voters.

There is also no question that Speaker Pelosi and the Democratic leadership were primed to use J6 as a partisan political weapon from the get-go. Pelosi signaled the intended weaponization of her new House Select Committee on the January 6 Attack by insisting that not only would she appoint the Democrats who would be on the "bipartisan" organization, but she would also dictate which Republicans would sit on the minority side. This was an unprecedented move to stack a committee, and the Republicans refused to play along — all except for two notorious never-Trumpers, that is. Representatives Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.) and Adam Kinzinger (R-Ill.) were more than happy to provide GOP protective coloration to the "Get Trump" dog and pony show. And what a show it was! Cheney and Kinzinger joined with far-left Democrats on the committee — Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.), Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), Jamie Raskin (D-Md.), Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.), Elaine Luria (D-Va.), Pete Aguilar (D-Calif.), and Stephanie Murphy (D-Fla.) — to make a mockery of the Constitution and the "rule of law" they claimed to be defending.

For nearly a year and a half, from July 2021 through December 2022, the J6 Committee was in nonstop smear mode against Donald Trump. It did precisely what it was set up to do: churn out an endless torrent of accusations and sensational stories of alleged Trump transgressions to divert public attention from the real malfeasance of the Biden crime family, the Hunter Biden laptop, and Sleepy Joe's rapidly deteriorating cognitive capacity. And, as to be expected, the complicit Deep State media obligingly lavished the committee's interminable "hearings" with 24/7 coverage and commentary. The intent was to poison the public perception of Donald Trump in preparation for the next move: indictment and prosecution. At the end of December 2022, the committee released its 845-page report, which recommended (surprise!) that the Department of Justice bring criminal charges against Donald Trump for obstruction of an official proceeding, conspiracy to defraud the United States, conspiracy to knowingly make a false statement, and assisting, aiding, or comforting an insurrection.

Predictably, Joe Biden's Attorney General Merrick Garland took the handoff from the Pelosi-Cheney gang and then picked Democratic hatchet man Jack Smith to go after Trump on two tracks: the phony classified-records case (for which Garland had already authorized the outrageous Mar-a-Lago FBI raid) and the bogus J6 election-conspiracy charges. And, naturally, the usual talking heads of the Deep State commentariat rejoiced that a champion of Smith's supposed ability and rectitude had been appointed to take down the Evil Orange Man.

Garland's new attack dog struck with a vengeance, hitting Donald Trump with 40 federal criminal charges related to his alleged mishandling of classified documents. The lapdogs of the controlled media called this unprecedented prosecution a "novel" legal approach, rather than calling it what it was: blatant lawfare and election interference. Ditto for Smith's four criminal counts of conspiracy and obstruction against Trump related to his actions on January 6, 2021. According to calculations by *Newsweek* reporters, Smith burned through more than $50 million before his cases collapsed. He resigned from

Set up: Rallygoers gathered at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021 to "stop the steal" of the 2020 election.

AP Images

the Justice Department on January 10, before incoming President Trump could fire him, something Trump said he would do in his first two minutes in office.

Of course, the Jack Smith/Merrick Garland campaign to use J6 and the Mar-a-Lago documents to stop Trump was only *part* of the multipronged lawfare and election-interference strategy of the Biden administration and the Democratic National Committee. Additional parts of the scheme were the ludicrous cases brought by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg (34 felony charges for alleged falsification of business records), Fulton County, Georgia, District Attorney Fani Willis (13 felony counts, including racketeering charges, related to the 2020 election), New York Attorney General Letitia James (alleged loan fraud), and a string of more than two dozen women who suddenly and conveniently remembered that Donald Trump sexually abused or raped them decades ago. These cases were designed to hamstring Trump's 2024 presidential campaign by keeping him in court, draining his financial resources, and giving the anti-Trump media round-the-clock negative images and copy, which they used with malicious delight.

However, even these outrages don't begin to quantify the extent of the eight-year savagery leveled at Donald J. Trump. We must remember that before their total obsession with J6, the same forces were obsessed with (and insisted *we* must be obsessed with) such fabrications as the Trump-Russia collusion conspiracy, the Steele dossier, the Trump-Ukraine conspiracy, the Trump impeachment farces, the Stormy Daniels "scandal," the Charlottesville misquotes, and many more. But the J6 obsession provides a bonus in that it has provided our governing elites with the fake justification for letting loose the police-state apparatus against otherwise peaceful Americans who are arbitrarily labeled as "domestic extremists," "white nationalists," "Christian nationalists," "racists," "antisemites," "haters," and "terrorists." The editorial board of *The New York Times*, the premier media voice of the Deep State globalists, showed us their scheme in their lead editorial for January 1, 2022, as the first anniversary of that "Day of Infamy" approached. Titled "Every Day Is Jan. 6 Now," the *Times* piece warned that "Jan. 6 is not in the past; it is every day." And the media presstitutes have done everything in their power to promote J6 fearmongering ever since.

The globalist Deep State cabal that has taken control of our federal government and so many of our institutions cannot tolerate someone like Trump, who has rallied tens of millions of Americans to the MAGA America First banner. He not only had to be stopped, he had to be crushed. They had to make an example of him. They had to show that no matter how rich or famous or powerful you are, you cannot stand against the New World Order planned by Klaus Schwab, the World Economic Forum, the Council on Foreign Relations, the United Nations, the World Health Organization, Xi Jinping, and the other advocates of totalitarian one-worldism.

Thus, the nonstop lawfare that dragged Donald Trump through multiple courtrooms for the past four years must be seen for what it truly is: the continuation of a desperate effort to crush not just one rogue individual, but to crush *each and every* awakening patriot who decides to take a stand and reject the socialist groupthink that has been foisted on us. That is why Merrick Garland unleashed the "shock and awe" power of the DOJ and FBI against hundreds of J6 protesters, many of whom were not engaged in any violent, destructive, or criminal activities.

In his March 21, 2021 interview with *60 Minutes*, U.S. federal prosecutor Michael Sherwin said, "I wanted to ensure, and our office wanted to ensure, that there was shock and awe, that we could charge as many people as possible before [January] 20. And it worked because we saw through media posts that people were afraid to come back to D.C., because they were like, 'If we go there, we're going to get charged.'"

But that was just the beginning. The DOJ/FBI shock-and-awe tactics were then unleashed against parents who protested transgender indoctrination in the schools, against peaceful pro-lifers who prayed at abortion clinics, against government whistleblowers, and more. And, as congressional hearings have revealed, the Biden-Harris DOJ and FBI blatantly interfered in the 2020 elections with massive censorship collusion involving Google, Facebook, Twitter, and other Big Tech/Big Media/Big Academia operations.

Donald Trump's ascension to the Oval Office and his pardoning of the J6 prisoners marks a welcome relief from the Biden-Harris reign of terror. But we still have far to go to drain the swamp and restore constitutionally limited government. ■

AP Images

Resignation: Former Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith oversaw his agency's investigation into Donald Trump's involvement in the January 6 U.S. Capitol rally. He resigned on January 10, 2025 — 10 days before Trump's second inauguration.

AP Images

Fed! Ray Epps told protesters to go "into the Capitol" on January 6, 2021, causing many to label him a federal *agent provocateur*.

AGENTS PROVOCATEURS BEHIND J6

The unvarnished, long-suppressed truth about the January 6 "fedsurrection" is likely to be finally revealed. Here we summarize what is known thus far.

by William F. Jasper

Will the brutal, unvarnished truth about the January 6 Capitol attack now finally be revealed? Will the past four years of nonstop hysterical headlines, media fright peddling, and Deep State conspiracy concerning that day finally be exposed? We have good reason to hope so since the inauguration of President Donald J. Trump on January 20. House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) announced on January 22 the establishment of a select subcommittee for the 119th Congress to "continue House Republicans' investigation into all events leading up to and after January 6." He named Representative Barry Loudermilk (R-Ga.) to chair the new subcommittee, which will operate under the House Judiciary Committee, chaired by Representative Jim Jordan (R-Ohio).

Loudermilk, who headed up the Republicans' J6 investigation as chairman of the House Subcommittee on Oversight during the 118th Congress, will now have more resources and a dedicated focus to "uncover the full truth that is owed to the American people." As chairman, Loudermilk issued the earlier subcommittee's 81-page "Initial Findings Report" in March of last year, and in December released a 128-page "Interim Report." Among many other important findings, the Loudermilk-led investigation found that "numerous federal laws were likely broken" by then-Representative Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.), the former vice chair of the January 6 Select Committee appointed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), "and these violations should be investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation." A prime example cited in the report is Cheney's alleged witness tampering regarding Cassidy Hutchinson, a ballyhooed "star witness" for the Democrats' fake January 6 investigation. That's a federal crime. Loudermilk's report, no doubt, was a significant factor in the decision by Team Biden to issue blanket preemptive pardons not only for Cheney, but for the entire cast of the Pelosi-Cheney stage show.

In addition to the new J6 select committee under Loudermilk, there is, of course, the sea change at the Department of Justice and the FBI. Gone are not only Merrick Garland at DOJ and Christopher Wray at the FBI, but many of their fellow partners in crime who resigned ahead of incoming President Trump. Pam Bondi as the new attorney general and Kash Patel as the new FBI director will still have an enormous cleanup job (at the time this issue went to press, the two had not yet been confirmed). But if they learn from the errors of the first Trump administration and, this time around, thoroughly root out all of the Deep State lackeys, open the files, and encourage whistleblowers to reveal the dark secrets, we have an historic opportunity to take our government back.

Exposing the "Fedsurrection" Conspiracy

The most disturbing thing about the January 6, 2021 Capitol "siege" is the steadily mounting evidence that it was a completely planned and orchestrated event. But, planned and orchestrated by whom? Well, Trump, of course, say the unified Democrat/media chorus. Yes, the same far-left Democrats and media shills who deride as a "conspiracy theorist" anyone who dares to point to an obvious conspiracy have pulled a great switcheroo. For the past four years, they have gone full-on conspiracy nutso. Oblivious to the ludicrousness of their hypocrisy, they have cheered on special counsel Jack Smith's political persecution of Donald Trump on absurd election-interference conspiracy charges. At the same time, they have censored evidence of a genuine election-interference conspiracy involving Attorney General Merrick Garland, special counsel Jack Smith, and farcical prosecutors Fani Wil-

AP Images

Get Trump at all costs: Representative Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.) was the "Republican" face of the January 6 Committee. A Republican-led investigation found that she likely engaged in witness tampering, a federal crime.

lis, Leticia James, and Alvin Bragg in a blatant scheme to hogtie Trump with litigation and brand him as a criminal during an election campaign.

Considering the treasonous, criminal lengths to which the Deep State cabal has gone to deep-six Trump (the Hunter Biden laptop disinformation hoax, the Trump-Russia collusion hoax, the Trump-Ukraine collusion hoax, the Georgia election phone call hoax, the classified documents hoax, etc.), it should surprise no one that the same forces would orchestrate the chaos of January 6 to destroy his chances at reelection and put him behind bars. In the following pages we will briefly examine some of the chief unanswered questions about the J6 "insurrection" that point to an anti-Trump conspiracy at the very top levels of our government.

Pipe-bomb Provocation/Coverup

On January 6, 2021, within minutes of Congress' vote to certify the 2020 presidential election, federal law enforcement "discovered" two pipe bombs near the headquarters of the Republican National Committee (RNC) and the Democratic National Committee (DNC) in Washington, D.C. The timing of the "discovery" is more than a little suspicious, since both bombs had been lying outside for more than 16 hours (since around 7:30 p.m. the previous evening), pretty much in plain sight, as surveillance videos show.

The bomb alarm caused the U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) to divert three of its four units to the pipe-bomb areas, leaving the Capitol perimeter severely undermanned at the precise moment that protesters (including undercover federal operatives?) were breaking through the weakened police lines. Almost as if it were planned that way, no? Precisely. In fact, former USCP Chief Steven Sund and USCP Inspector General Michael Bolton both suggested that the bombs *were* a diversion plan. But orchestrated by whom? This is where it gets *very* curious, since all the evidence seems to indicate that neither the Pelosi-Cheney J6 Select Committee, nor the FBI, nor the DOJ, nor the Fake News media was the least bit interested in pursuing this matter. No, they were fanatically fixated on focusing the nation's attention in another direction: on hunting down Purple Heart veterans, soccer moms, and MAGA grandmas.

The GOP subcommittee's report on the pipe bombs, released on January 2, 2025, notes that the Pelosi-Cheney Committee's "845-page report only referenced the pipe bombs five times in passing." Curious, indeed, if they were real and "viable" explosives, as the FBI claims. If so, these instruments might have caused deaths and severe injuries. However, there are many serious problems with the official pipe-bomb account. Thanks to the dogged pursuit of this issue by Representatives Loudermilk and Thomas Massie (R-Ky.), as well as the fearless reporting by Darren Beattie at Revolver News and Julie Kelly, who writes on several platforms, the pipe-bomb coverup is exploding. Here is just a fraction of the troubling details involved in the apparent effort by federal authorities to make the pipe-bomb issue disappear:

• Whistleblower and former FBI Special Agent Kyle Seraphin, who worked on the case, says the pipe bombs were inoperable. According to Seraphin, technicians working in the joint program office for countering improvised explosive devices told him that the devices would not detonate.

• The FBI's official story is that the pipe bombs were loaded with black gunpowder. But a Secret Service bomb-sniffing dog and his handler failed to notice it, as can be seen in the DNC security video.

• After the bombs were "discovered," DNC security videos show, Secret Service and police officers nonchalantly wandered about and inexplicably allowed pedestrians, motorists, and a commuter train to pass through an "active bomb scene."

• Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's motorcade passed through the bomb scene, and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris' motorcade entered the DNS garage, a mere 20 feet from the explosive device. Yet, in the Democrats' vitriolic denunciations of the J6 "insurrection," they have avoided bringing up the pipe bombs. Why?

• Contrary to repeated assertions by FBI officials that their manhunt for the pipe-bomb suspect was vigorous and relentless, the FBI's Washington field office waited more than a year to task FBI field offices nationwide to canvass all their sources for information on the suspect. Seraphin said this was "unusual."

• For four years, after initially releasing selectively cropped video footage from the DNC security cameras, the FBI stonewalled repeated congressional calls for the release of additional footage that would provide more details to help in identifying the suspect. On January 2, 2025, the same day that Loudermilk released a report charging that the bureau was involved in a massive coverup, the FBI released more video footage. But it was intentionally slowed down to one frame per second (rather than the standard 15+ frames per second), producing a choppy, grainy

image that provides no help in identifying the suspect.

• Of special concern is the role of Ashan Benedict, who, as special agent in charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in Washington, D.C., was in control of the pipe-bomb scene. To explain away the stunning lack of concern shown by law-enforcement personnel at the DNC bomb site, Benedict offered the absurd excuse that they did not secure the area and allowed pedestrians, motorists, commuters, and officials to be exposed to mortal danger — so as to not cause panic!

• In November 2023, Benedict was appointed to his current position as assistant chief of the U.S. Capitol Police, where he oversees dignitary protection and intelligence. As such, he is perfectly positioned as a gatekeeper to control the testimony of Capitol Police. Observers say his presence in the audience at congressional hearings appears to be as an enforcer to ensure that officers faithfully regurgitate the party line.

• In 2023, FBI whistleblower Seraphin told *The Washington Times*: "The FBI had surveillance video that showed the [bomber] entering a car with a visible license plate."

• A former FBI assistant director told Loudermilk's subcommittee, "It just doesn't add up.... There's just too much to work with to not know who this guy is."

• Kenneth Capolino is a former Capitol Police officer who went on to work as the RNC's director of security. He was the man who personally alerted Capitol Police to the bomb near the RNC. "I'm the last one to speculate, but it doesn't make sense. It doesn't at all," he said, referring to the FBI's "investigation."

"This is an ongoing coverup at this point," Representative Massie told The Daily Wire in January 2024. "It's the worst scandal of January 6, that's for sure." Massie has spent thousands of hours poring over videos and documents of January 6. "[A pipe bomb] is made to maim and kill," he notes. "And the people who were protesting that day did not have weapons meant to maim and kill. So you would think they [the FBI/DOJ] would be very focused on these pipe bombs, but they aren't."

Massie is not the only investigator who has reached that conclusion. Revolver News, which has broken many of the stories exposing this coverup, says that "The January 6 pipe bombs are 100% a hoax and 100% a cover-up." Investigative reporter Julie Kelly agrees, titling one of her explosive stories (pun intended), "The January 6 Pipe Bombs Look Like Another FBI Hoax."

Ray Epps and "Scaffold Commander"

Ray Epps and an as-yet-unidentified man dubbed "Scaffold Commander," two key instigators of the Capitol melee, have been curiously protected by the DOJ/FBI, the Pelosi/Cheney Select Committee, and the media. Epps was famously videotaped the day before President Trump's January 6 Ellipse rally yelling at a crowd of MAGA supporters, telling them that the next day they must "go *into* the Capitol! Go *into* the Capitol!" His actions caused so much concern that some of the attendees around him suspected he must be a federal *agent provocateur*. As can be seen on videos that have gone viral, people began pointing at him and chanting "Fed! Fed! Fed!" to warn fellow patriots not to follow his advice. On the day of the riot, Epps can be seen on multiple videos urging the people to go to the Capitol and then walking the Capitol police perimeter like an official commander of the crowd. Most damning, we see him whispering into protester Ryan Samsel's ear only seconds before Samsel pushes over a barricade, thus causing the first perimeter breach. An hour later, Epps texts his nephew: "I was in front with a few others ... I also orchestrated it."

Initially Epps was #16 on the FBI's "most wanted" list of J6 suspects. But he was quickly, inexplicably removed. Then, curiously, he became the darling of the Pelosi/Cheney crowd and the regime media. At the same time that they were vilifying other far-less culpable J6ers, *The New York Times* and the other usual "news" organs began featuring stories defending Epps and portraying him as a victim of vicious "conspiracy theorists." Also of passing interest is the fact that Epps' attorney is one John Blischak, a former FBI agent who says on his law firm's web page that he maintains relations with the FBI.

"Scaffold Commander" can be seen in multiple videos atop the scaffolding at the Capitol, shouting through a bullhorn, taunting police, and agitating the crowd to go into the Capitol. Since many photographs and video freeze-frames provide clear images of this key agitator's face, it should not be too difficult for the FBI to identify and find him — if they truly want to find him, that is.

FBI

Blown out of proportion: The alleged pipe-bomb threat was used to vilify Trump and his supporters after January 6, 2021. A lackluster investigation by the FBI and the release of intentionally obscured footage of the suspect lead many to believe it was all a hoax.

The Gallows Hoax

The centerpiece for many of the hyperventilating stories about the Capitol "insurrection" was the wooden gallows and

hangman's noose that was mysteriously constructed on the Capitol lawn on the morning of January 6. It is incessantly cited as evidence of the violent intent of the MAGA rallygoers. Video footage shows five men unloading lumber from a white van and assembling the gallows. Three of the men wear hoodies and face masks, but two of them have their faces exposed and are distinctively dressed, one in a black fedora and the other in a cowboy hat. It is illegal to place any type of structure on the Capitol grounds, but the Capitol Police did nothing to stop the construction or have it removed. Pelosi's House J6 Committee members were more than happy to condemn the gallows as an image of hate, racism, and terrorism, but were strangely not interested in finding out who had put it there. When Loudermilk's subcommittee began investigating the matter, they found that the FBI had not asked for the video from the many other cameras in the surrounding area. They undoubtedly can identify the white van, and at least two of the five gallows-builders.

26 or 200 Fed Assets at J6?

In December of last year, DOJ Inspector General Michael Horowitz issued a report admitting that 26 FBI confidential human sources, but not FBI *agents*, were present in the crowd at the Capitol on January 6, with four of them going into the Capitol and 13 entering the restricted area around the Capitol. Millions of viewers who watched various hearings over the past four years will recall the many times Merrick Garland, Christopher Wray, and other DOJ/FBI officials repeatedly refused to answer when asked by senators and congressmen if there were any federal undercover operatives at the Capitol on January 6. This is what is known in spycraft as a "limited hangout": When caught in wrongdoing, admit to a little to cover up larger offenses.

Representative Clay Higgins (R-La.) is one of the members of Congress who has dug deeply into the nonsensical claims of the official J6 narrative. Higgins has stated multiple times that he has seen abundant evidence — which under court order has not yet been made public —showing that *200 or more* federal agents and assets were in the crowd on January 6. Considering the record of brazen lying by top officials at the FBI and other intel agencies over the past eight years, and the record of inspector-general reports that have proven to be whitewashes, why would any reasonable person *not* be inclined to believe Higgins over the Swamp's proven liars?

D'Antuono's Michigan Plot Rerun

As we have noted in past articles, the J6 Capitol ruckus bears important ties to the earlier, FBI-directed "Whitmer kidnapping plot" that was sprung a month before the November 2020 elections and three months prior to the January 6 events. With great fanfare, the FBI announced they had foiled a pro-Trump militia plot to kidnap Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, a liberal Democrat. The alleged plotters also planned to storm the Michigan Capitol in a scheme eerily like what transpired on January 6. As became clear during the trials of the plotters, all of the key people orchestrating the kidnapping operation were undercover FBI agents or their paid informants: the explosives procurer, the militia's head of security, and the head of transportation, plus nine additional agents or informants who played important roles.

"In one of the plot's climactic scenes," Revolver News reported, "in the main van driving up to look at Governor Whitmer's vacation home, three out of the five people in the van — 60 percent of the plot's senior leaders — were federal agents and informants." The FBI-run plot was effectively used to smear Trump and divert attention from the Hunter Biden laptop, which the Deep State intel community falsely labeled as Russian disinformation. The lead architect of the Whitmer false-flag caper was the head of the Detroit FBI field office, Steven D'Antuono. He was rewarded with a promotion to head the prized Washington, D.C., field office, just weeks before J6. As such, he was placed in the precise position to duplicate in even larger scale for January 6 what he had already accomplished in Michigan.

In a press conference a few days after the J6 fracas and the finding of the pipe bombs, D'Antuono vowed that the bombers would be "brought to justice." He also promised that "every rock is being unturned" in this investigation of unprecedented scope. Hmm. The expression usually is that "*no rock* will be left unturned," or, conversely, that "every rock *will be turned*," to show one's determination to pursue every fact, every clue, every suspect. If every rock is being "unturned," then no rock is being looked under, which is the very definition of a whitewash or coverup. Did D'Antuono slip up and tell the truth for once? ■

Fedsurrection: Representative Clay Higgins (R-La.) has looked into the January 6 protest extensively, and is convinced that more than 200 federal agents were present at the Capitol that day and that the entire operation was part of a federal plot to destroy Trump.

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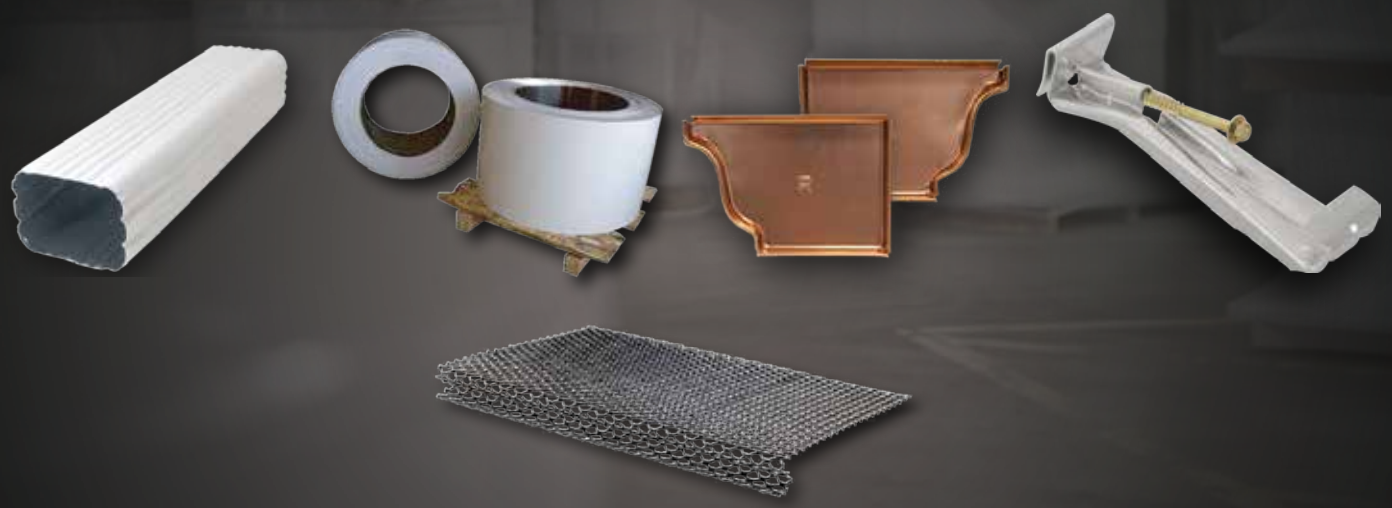

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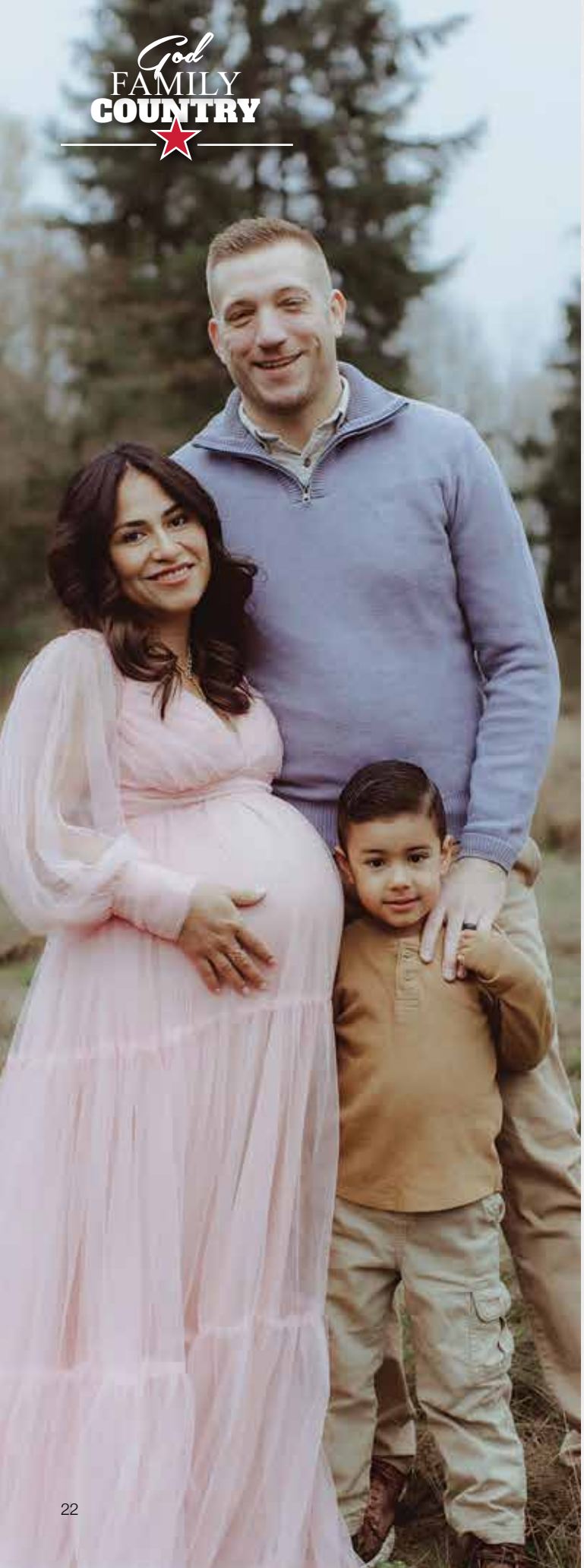


MATT STICKNEY

THE STORY OF A J6ER

by William F. Jasper

There was jubilation in the Stickney household when President Donald Trump signed the proclamation granting pardons and commutations to the approximately 1,500 Americans prosecuted for alleged crimes related to the protests at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. Like hundreds of other families, the Stickneys, who live in the Seattle area, were still awaiting a court date for a family member who had been charged by the Biden Justice Department but still hadn't gone to trial. Larry and Polly Stickney's son Matt, age 35 and the father of two young children, was facing, potentially, two or more years in prison.

Keeping a campaign promise he had made many times, President Trump signed the proclamation amid a flurry of executive order signings that marked Day 1 of Trump 47. The proclamation began by naming 14 individuals whose prison sentences are commuted to time served. It then proceeded to "grant a full, complete and unconditional pardon to all other individuals convicted of offenses related to events that occurred at or near the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021."

To the more than 400 individuals whose cases have still not reached the courts, the following words of the proclamation were especially important: "I further direct the Attorney General to pursue dismissal with prejudice to the government of all pending indictments against individuals for their conduct related to the events at or near the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021."

"Dismissal with prejudice" means that the charges are *permanently* dismissed and cannot be brought up again in the future. However, when Trump signed the proclamation, the text of the document was not immediately available, so J6 defendants with pending cases were still not sure if they were included in it. Many were also concerned because Trump seemed to be vacillating during some of his speeches and press conferences as to how many of the J6ers would be pardoned or have their sentences commuted. The Stickneys' anxieties soon were relieved when they received an email from Matt's attorney, Carolyn Stewart, informing them that their ordeal was over.

"We're ecstatic here now," Larry told *The New American* in a telephone interview two days after the dismissal by Trump.

"For four years they let Matt — and us — sweat it out, wondering if today might be the day that FBI SWAT teams break down the door. We were really fortunate compared to many of the other defendants. Thanks to [J6 defendant] Jenny Cudd, who put us in touch with a top-notch attorney, Carolyn Stewart, Matt didn't have to spend a day in prison, other than the few hours in custody after his arrest."

"The last four years were the darkest time of my life," Larry said. "We lived in fear, afraid to talk to any of the other defendants, keeping a low profile, expecting the Biden DOJ hammer to come down at any time. That didn't let up after [Matt's] arrest and release."

Adding to the anxiety was the nonstop media fearmongering over January 6. "The media beat me up and Matt both," Stickney related, and constantly churned out the "domestic extremist" stories. Not only did the major Seattle media and local press pile on, but the national media joined in as well. The same "news" organizations that sympathized with the BLM/Antifa thugs who violently occupied Seattle for weeks in 2020 and burned and destroyed much of the city were suddenly righteously outraged about the January 6 protesters. Moreover, they were unwilling even to consider the extensive, and mounting, evidence pointing to the conclusion that the J6 "riot" and some of the worst offenses of that day were actually instigated and/or carried out by federal *agents provocateurs*. (See page 17.)

Considering all the bad press following his arrest, Matt fully expected to be fired from his job as a stationary engineer. He credits his employer with great courage for not buckling to the media pressure. He was put on paid leave for several months and then was allowed to return to work.

So, what did Matt Stickney do that brought the wrath of Merrick Garland's DOJ and Christopher Wray's FBI down on his head? According to Matt, he flew from Seattle to Washington, D.C., on the evening of January 5. He checked into a hotel and contacted his only friend in the area. The next day they went together to the famous Trump rally on the Ellipse, along with more than 100,000 other Trump supporters.

When the rally was over, Matt and his friend followed thousands of other rallygoers who were walking the mile or so to the Capitol, completely unaware of the clashes with police that had begun there an hour before. When they arrived at the Capitol, a line had already formed going up the stairs into the building, so they got in the line and followed along.

Matt estimates that he was in the Capitol for 15 to 20 minutes. While there, he picked up an American flag and waved it as he walked up and down a couple hallways, then left it at the door before exiting the building. Curiously, in hindsight, he says, while he was waving the flag a couple of Capitol Police officers walked by him paying him no mind. They obviously did not consider him to be an "insurrectionist" or a threat of any kind, he notes.

However, when he got back to the hotel, he saw how the media was treating not only the melee at the Capitol, but the rally and President Trump's speech as well. The regime propaganda mill was cranking up a crescendo of fear: "violent insurrection," "attempted coup," "incitement to riot," "conspiracy," "sedition," "white supremacists," "racists," "far-right extremists." It was obvious that all rally participants and those who went to the Capitol were being smeared and targeted.

Matt flew back home the next day. He watched the DOJ/FBI "Shock and Awe" campaign unfold as grandmas and soccer-mom tourists were rounded up along with alleged violent offenders.

Matt's arrest did not come until nearly three years later, in December 2023. On that day, Matt and his wife, Deysi, went to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office in Seattle for an interview. Deysi is an immigrant from Peru and, unlike the millions of alien immigrants Biden assisted in swarming across the border, was involved in the long, drawn-out process of *legally* obtaining citizenship. "It was a trap," Matt recalled to *The New American*. "The smiling immigration officers greeted

Courtesy of the Stickney family

False-flag op? More than 100,000 people peacefully attended the J6 rally at the Ellipse. Only a fraction of them went to the Capitol, and only a tiny fraction of those engaged in violent or illegal activity. Were 200 of the leaders of this "insurrection" federal agents/assets?

us, took us through security, and then led us into a room — where FBI agents were waiting to arrest and handcuff me."

"Clearly, they had staked him out early on," Larry says. "They were taking photos of him for weeks outside his work and home." "I was surprised at the extent of the photographs they had of me, which we obtained during the discovery process," Matt told me.

Matt was charged with two misdemeanor counts under 18 U.S. Code 1752: "Entering or remaining in a Restricted Building or Grounds" and "Disorderly and Disruptive Conduct in a Restricted Area or Grounds."

Additionally, he faced two misdemeanor charges under 40 U.S. Code 5104 pertaining to alleged "Disorderly Conduct in a Capitol Building" and "Parading, Demonstrating, or Picketing in a Capitol Building." As with most of the other J6 defendants, conviction could result in six months (or more) in prison for each of these charges, meaning Matt could have been facing two years or more of prison time. In order to jack up their conviction record of "insurrectionists" and advance the narrative that the J6 prosecutions were taking dangerous "domestic extremists" off the street, federal prosecutors offered to drop two of the charges if Matt would cop a plea to the other two. He refused.

"I wasn't guilty of those charges, so I wasn't going to plead to something I hadn't done. I don't blame the other [J6] defendants who pleaded out. It's a very frightening position to be in where you're facing the might of the federal government." Matt says he had the benefit of being charged later than many of the others and being able to see how the process was working. Besides, he had the counsel of an "excellent, hard-fighting attorney" who was also representing other J6 defendants. As payback for his refusing their plea deal, the prosecutors slammed Matt with another 5104 charge of "Entering or Remaining in Certain Rooms in the Capitol Building."

His trial date was set for April 2025. Thanks to President Trump's proclamation, the Stickneys are no longer waiting on pins and needles. This reprieve comes along with additional blessings that have recently brightened the Stickney clan's four-year tribulation. Just weeks ago, on December 22, Matt and Deysi were blessed with a baby girl, Lucia Rose. And when this writer called on the evening of January 22, they had all just gotten home from the wedding of one of Matt's sisters. Matt is the middle child in a family of two boys and seven girls. His father, Larry, a longtime activist in pro-family/pro-life organizations in Washington state, currently works as an aide to a Pierce County Council member. His mother, Polly, is the Washington field staff coordinator for The John Birch Society.

The Stickneys say they are grateful for a merciful God and for their Christian faith that has seen them through these trials. In their Christmas message to friends and family they wrote, "We believe that God, in His mercy, has already begun to change the course of this country and history with the election of President Trump."

Matt told me he believes the FBI made the arrest at the immigration office to inject more psychological stress into his already-stressful situation. "I think they wanted not only to frighten us with the prospect of me going to prison, but also to add the additional fear that Deysi and our children might be deported."

"If there are any members of the FBI, DOJ or other agencies out there who read this," he said, "I want them to know that they failed in destroying me, destroying our marriage, destroying our family, or destroying our faith in God. This ordeal has just made our love and our marriage stronger."

"Without a doubt," Matt continued, "this has strengthened our faith and has brought me much closer to God and made me commit to being a better Christian. When trials like this come and you have nowhere else to turn, it forces one to turn to our heavenly Father. Deysi was the one who pointed me back to Christ and she has been incredibly strong in all of this. May God continue to bless us and may God bless America." ■

AP Images

FROM CALIFORNIA DREAMIN' TO BURNIN'

The Golden State was once a land of riches, opportunity, and innovation. Now it has become a punchline and mismanaged wasteland that's burning to the ground.

by Paul Dragu

California is on fire. Again.

Beginning January 7, several fires ignited in the Los Angeles area. Strong Santa Ana winds swept the blazes, causing them to grow to disastrous proportions, turning entire communities to ashes. The official response from California's leaders was that Mother Nature was to blame in this case, and the one-two-three combo punch of fire, dry conditions, and 90-plus mph winds could not have been anticipated or prevented.

But many aren't buying it. Information continues to surface in support of the accusations that Los Angeles' leadership failed to prepare for a disaster that was predicted at least a month in advance. Moreover, many believe the people in charge of California were too preoccupied with implementing nonsensical diversity, equity, and inclusion standards (DEI), saving species of fish no one has ever heard of, and other leftist pursuits to have noticed that the state wasn't ready to fight fires anymore. The evidence bears that out.

On December 4, 2024, the chief of the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) signed off on a memo warning that the latest budget cuts would dampen the department's ability to effectively fight fires. In the memo, she said the roughly $18 million in reductions "severely limited the department's capacity to prepare for, train for, and respond to large-scale emergencies, including wildfires."

The memo was presented later that month to the Board of Fire Commissioners, a panel of mayoral appointees who oversee the department. A month later, California Governor Gavin Newsom denied that the firefighting budget was cut.

On January 2, 2025, the National Weather Service (NWS) warned of "significant" fire potential for Southern California in the coming days. The alert came with a map that highlighted in red the exact area in danger, lest there be any confusion. The NWS forecast emphasized the seriousness of the warning by mentioning that in the previous month, the region had already been hit with "a strong Santa Ana wind event [that] resulted in the Franklin Fire."

The day after that, January 3, the local Storm Prediction Center forecast a "critical risk" of fire weather within the next few days. It too included an illustration highlighting the vulnerable area.

Two more days had passed when, on January 5, the NWS Los Angeles/Oxnard office raised alarms that the region was about to be hit with a wind event with the potential to be the most severe in more than a decade, describing it as "life-threatening and destructive."

While all this was happening, the Santa Ynez Reservoir in the Pacific Palisades area sat empty and out of service, void of water, posing no threat to the infernos that in days to come would incinerate the neighborhoods around it and take the lives of at least 27 people (that number will likely be higher by the time you read this). The reservoir holds 117 million gallons of water. It had been out of commission for about a year because of a problem with the floating cover. The official story is that the bidding process for the repair was holding up the repair process.

Paul Dragu is a senior editor for The New American.

AP Images

Devastation: The Eaton Fire in the San Gabriel Mountains, north of Pasadena, was the second largest fire (after the Palisades Fire) to ignite on or about January 7. After two weeks, it had burned more than 14,000 acres and 7,000 structures.

By January 2025, Southern California had been experiencing "the driest 9-month period ever observed," local news outlet KTLA reported. But droughts and fires are not unique to the most populated state in America. The Golden State and all Intermountain West states are confronted with intense fire seasons every few years. In 2024 alone, 8,024 fires burned more than one million California acres, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire). Before that, there was the Getty Fire of 2019; the Woolsey Fire of 2018, which burned nearly 97,000 acres; the La Tuna Fire of 2017; the Station Fire of 2009, which burned more than 160,000 acres over 51 days; the Malibu Fire of 1991; the Stokes Fire; the Canyon Fire; the Bel Air Fire; and others. Statewide, the Camp Fire of 2018 leveled the town of Paradise in Butte County, burning more than 153,000 acres and killing 84 people. In 2017, the Tubbs Fire in Napa and Sonoma counties killed 22. The Oakland-Berkeley Hills Fire of 1991 killed 25 people. The Griffith Park Fire of 1933 took 29 lives.

Beginning on Tuesday, January 7, a series of fires that would prove among the most destructive in the state's long history of infernos ignited and razed at least 40,000 acres in the Los Angeles region. At the time of this writing, some of the fires were still raging.

The Palisades Fire started just before 10:30 a.m. in the hills above Pacific Palisades. Witnesses said they saw it take hold in the dry grassland before jumping down the hillside with the help of the rising winds. By 10:43 a.m., flames were already visible in the Pacific Palisades Highlands neighborhood, according to reports. Within 20 minutes, the blaze reached Sunset Boulevard and the Pacific Coast Highway with help from 60 mph winds. The winds in the area would approach 100 mph within the next 24 hours.

The Palisades Fire grew fast, forcing residents to evacuate. One resident described to NBC News what it was like to be so close to a raging inferno. "You could hear fire crackling and everything burning. And the smell was awful, ash blowing in our faces. It was just so fast. You kept seeing it spread and spread," she said.

As panic set in, a mad rush toward Palisades Drive, the only road leading directly to Sunset Boulevard, commenced. But it didn't take long for vehicles to stop up the road and grind traffic to a complete halt. An alternate road, Fire Road, was already engulfed in flames, removing the route as an option for evacuation. What happened next reads like a scene out of *The Day After Tomorrow.* NBC reported:

> Many panicked drivers abandoned their cars in the road and took off on foot, forcing emergency crews to bulldoze the vehicles aside so that fire trucks could get through. Firefighters told residents in some parts of the neighborhood to stay put temporarily because there wasn't initially an imminent danger and there was no easy way out.
>
> The winds kicked up, engorging the flames and pushing embers into the air and down farther away, where they ignited new hot spots. The fire consumed the mountainside and swept through the Highlands, the village and the rest of the Pacific Palisades, then west along the coast to Malibu.

Over the next 10 days, the Palisades Fire consumed more than 23,000 acres and 3,501 structures, including many homes. A number of other blazes ignited in the area around the same time. There was the Eaton Fire in the San Gabriel Mountains, north of Pasadena, which had burned more than 14,000 acres and 7,000 structures at the time of this writing; the Hurst Fire, which started near Sylmar; and a number of smaller fires including the Kenneth, Lidia, Sunset, and Archer fires. Some of the fires have been fully contained, including the Hurst and the smaller blazes, thanks, in part, to help from firefighters in neighboring states and Mexico. So far, at least 40,000 acres of one of the most densely populated regions in the country has been turned to ashes.

What Sparked the Fires?

Authorities are looking into what sparked the fires. It's likely the official triggers will never be determined for some of them, but here's what was known at the time of this writing.

The Palisades Fire started in an area that had hosted a small brush fire seven days earlier. Some speculation suggests that remnants of the fire hung around until the Santa Ana winds came back with a vengeance January 7, giving it new life.

In the case of the Eaton Fire, lawsuits against the electrical company Southern California Edison (SCE) allege that faulty overhead electrical wires ignited the blaze. The lawsuits accuse SCE of negligence. This isn't the first time power companies have faced such accusations. Southern California Edison paid hundreds of millions of dollars in settlements related to at

least seven other wildfires, including $80 million settlements to the U.S. Forest Service for the 2017 Thomas Fire and to Los Angeles County for the 2020 Bobcat Fire.

And regarding the Kenneth Fire, which burned 1,000 acres, LAPD Senior Lead Officer Charles Dinse told NewsNation that police believe the fire was the result of arson. Citizens took down a suspect in the West Valley area after a civilian saw someone with a blowtorch trying to light up the place and alerted people nearby. The suspect, 33-year-old Mexican national Juan Manuel Sierra, happens to be an illegal alien. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that Los Angeles County Jail records say he has an ICE detainer request.

Police also arrested 60-year-old Gloria Lynn Mandich on a felony charge of arson in connection to a brush fire near Leo Carrillo State Park in Los Angeles County, which firefighters quickly put out.

Human activity is responsible for most fires in California. An analysis by the U.S. Forest Service found that human activity started 86 percent of wildfires between 1992 and 2020. Cal Fire believes the number is higher than that. It blames humans for 95 percent of California's fires, the other major culprit being lightning. The top three human-related fire starters are equipment and vehicles, arson, and burning debris.

California resident, former California gubernatorial candidate, and renowned investigative journalist Mike Shellenberger told popular podcast host Tucker Carlson that homeless people start half of the fires put out in Los Angeles. "Meth heads" in particular — people addicted to methamphetamines — love to start fires, he added.

There are about 187,000 homeless people in California, with about 75,000 in Los Angeles County. Homelessness in California has increased by 40 percent under Governor Newsom, according to Shellenberger. A main reason for that is that the state's purported attempt to reduce homelessness has actually incentivized it. Shellenberger interviewed multiple homeless people years ago and learned that many had moved to California to receive welfare money while being homeless. Moreover, California is lax on open drug use. A few years ago, San Francisco Mayor London Breed created a fentanyl and meth "use site" in United Nations Plaza in downtown San Francisco, Shellenberger learned.

The Climate-change Boogeyman

While humans start most fires in California, environmental conditions determine how easily a spark turns into a blaze. California's wet years of 2022-23 brought about huge vegetation growth. But those wet years were followed by many months of drought, which has turned the region into a big tinderbox.

Environmental alarmists blame the recent fires, as well as many others going back decades, on the climate-change boogeyman. They say extreme weather, triggered by gas-powered cars and belching cows, is creating conditions that lead to larger, more intense, and increasingly lethal fires. But there are a few problems with this narrative. When it comes to rainfall, there have been no major long-term changes over the last 100 years. A chart from the Los Angeles Almanac showing a consistent ebb and flow of rainfall over the last century makes this point clear.

Environmental alarmists also like to cite the increased cost in infrastructure and rising fatalities from natural disasters as proof of climate change. Even in cases where this is true, the narrative is deceptive. One hundred years ago, in 1925, there were about 116 million people in America, 3.4 million of them in California. By 1975, that number grew to 211 million nationwide, with 21.5 million occupying California. And in 2025, another 50 years later, the official population of the United States stands at 340 million, with more than 39 million residing in California. Population increase has been accompanied by massive expansion in infrastructure. When climate alarmists use the rising costs of infrastructure damage as proof of human-caused climate change, it's the equivalent of saying that because beaches are the most common places for shark attacks, they're the most dangerous. Shark attacks happen on beaches because that's where the people are. Fires are destroying more buildings because there are many more buildings. What has truly intensified is incompetence and ideologically driven stupidity among the people making decisions in California.

AP Images

Preoccupied: California Governor Gavin Newsom is once again in the hot seat after a series of fires ignited all over the Los Angeles area, rendering thousands of people homeless and reducing thousands of structures to ashes. Newsom is facing accusations that the state's leadership was too preoccupied with DEI initiatives and other nonsense to properly prepare for the devastation.

Forest Mismanagement

For the longest time, common forest-management practices included clearing out deadfall, initiating controlled burns, and taking other preventive measures to ensure that when the inevitable happens, there's less fuel for the fires. But environmentalists have meddled in the politics of wildfires. Ignorant yet zealous and effective activists

have made it difficult to thin out vegetation. In the name of saving obscure creatures that may or may not be legitimately endangered, activists have triggered environmental laws that have turned California into one giant, overgrown tinderbox. Reuters reported that there were 38 lawsuits between 2009 and 2017 over the federal government's forest management decisions. Also, the *Sierra Club v. Bosworth* lawsuit from the early 2000s led to restrictions on the practices of controlled burns and removal of underbrush. In a September 10, 2020 article by the California Policy Center, Director of Water and Energy Policy Edward Ring said this about the impact of environmental activists:

> Year after year, environmentalists litigated and lobbied to stop efforts to clear the forests through timber harvesting, underbrush removal, and controlled burns. Meanwhile, natural fires were suppressed and the forests became more and more overgrown. The excessive biomass competed for the same water, soil, and light a healthier forest would have used, rendering all of the trees and underbrush unhealthy. It wasn't just excess biomass that accumulated, but *dried out and dead* biomass. [Emphasis in original.]

In 2020, U.S. Representative Tom McClintock (R-Calif.) told investigative journalist Katy Grimes, "Our forests are now catastrophically overgrown, often carrying four times the number of trees the land can support. In this stressed and weakened condition, our forests are easy prey for drought, disease, pestilence and fire." He decried the reversal of effective fire-management policies:

> [Forty] years ago, we replaced these sound management practices with what can only be described as a doctrine of benign neglect. Ponderous, Byzantine laws and regulations administered by a growing cadre of ideological zealots in our land management agencies promised to "save the environment."

Controlled burns have been common practice in the region for thousands of years. Native Americans intentionally burned designated areas to get rid of fuel — deadfall, brush, and other flammable materials. That's the nature of living in a region that is prone to wildfires. But instead of doing what's proven to work, over the last few decades forest-management agencies have poured billions into hiring and training firefighters for fire suppression while neglecting tried and true forest-pruning techniques.

Mismanagement: Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass has taken a lot of heat for mismanaging the city's resources and not prioritizing fire management. She was out of the country when the fires started, and hasn't sown much confidence since her return. A petition demanding she resign immediately has garnered more than 140,000 signatures.

AP Images

After the latest fires in California broke out, the issue of California's senseless practices was reignited. *Newsweek* spoke to multiple experts on fire management. A Forest Service representative echoed the need for controlled burns to "reduce the risk of unwanted wildfires in the future." Also, the director of economic analysis at the Chamber of Progress, Tahra Jirari, told *Newsweek* that "there's no denying that wildfires are getting worse — and if lawmakers want to get serious about fighting them, they need to make sure we have every possible tool at our disposal, including proven tactics like controlled burns." But there's a problem, *Newsweek* continued:

> [In] order for these prescribed fires to occur, they must go through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process, which can last anywhere from 3.6 years to 7.2 years between the time of initiation to when the burning can actually begin, according to a 2022 policy brief from the Property and Environment Research Center (PERC).

Failed Leadership

Then there's the woke, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)-driven leadership of the LAFD. Four lesbians occupy top command positions. Kristin Crowley is the LAFD's first LGBTQ fire chief, Kristina Kepner is the first lesbian assistant chief, Kristine Larson is the LAFD's first lesbian Equity Bureau chief, and Jaime Brown is the LAFD's first lesbian training commander. While these four might be exceptional at shattering glass ceilings, it turns out they're not so exceptional at saving people from fires. A promo video featuring Larson exposes an LAFD leader who subscribes to ideas so moronic they verge on dangerous. In the video, Larson says people want to see first responders who look like them. What she means is that Californians don't want to be rescued by strong, straight, white men. But it gets worse. She admits she can't carry a man out of a fire, but adds that he shouldn't have put himself in that situation in the first place, saying, "He got himself in the wrong place if I have to carry him out of a fire."

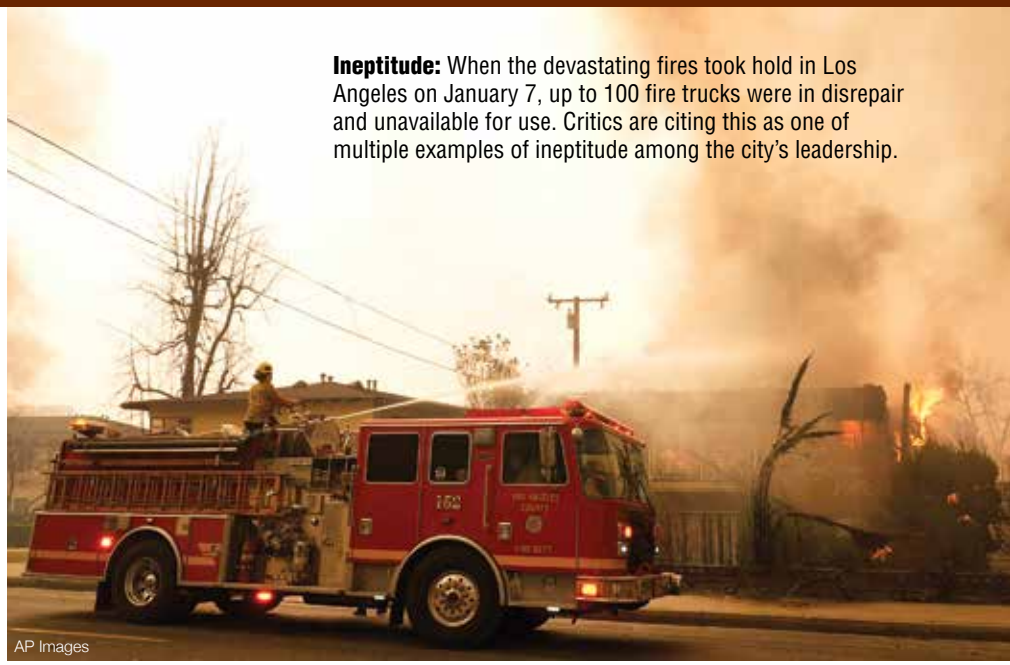
Consider also the ever-slick-and-slimy Newsom. The former member of the

World Economic Forum's Young Global Leaders program already slithered his way out of one recall, after he essentially turned California into China with his Covid policies. Now he's once again facing calls to resign. Newsom has proven impressive in his ability to accelerate the state's deterioration. Rising taxes, crime, and homelessness, along with rotting infrastructure, have pushed out many residents and businesses. From 2020 to 2024, at least 158 companies, including all three of Elon Musk's companies — X, SpaceX, and Tesla — as well as Chevron, Neutrogena, FICO, Charles Schwab, Oracle, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, and many more, left California.

When confronted with reports that he signed a state budget that slashed funding for preventing and fighting wildfires by $101 million, Governor Newsom called them a "ridiculous lie." He said California doubled the size of the state's firefighting army and increased the forest-management staff tenfold. Newsom did slash $101 million in the 2024-25 California state budget for wildfires, but Cal Fire's wildfire-protection budget had increased from $1.1 billion in 2014 to $3 billion in 2023, mostly after Newsom became governor in 2019, according to *Newsweek*, which looked at an analysis by the state's legislative analyst's office. There was a reduction of $5 million in spending on Cal Fire fuel-reduction teams, including funds used to pay for vegetation-management work by the California National Guard. Another $4 million was removed from a forest legacy program aimed at encouraging good management practices by landowners.

Plus, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass is under fire for depleting the LAFD budget. The *New York Post* reported:

> Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass faced scorching criticism Wednesday as it was revealed she cut the city's fire department budget by $17.6 million ahead of this week's devastating fires — as she prioritized funds for its massive homeless population that largely went unspent, according to a report.
>
> The cut was the second-largest in Bass' 2024-25 fiscal budget, city figures show — and it wasn't even the gutting she wanted. If she'd had it her way, the LAFD budget would have been slashed by $23 million.



Ineptitude: When the devastating fires took hold in Los Angeles on January 7, up to 100 fire trucks were in disrepair and unavailable for use. Critics are citing this as one of multiple examples of ineptitude among the city's leadership.

AP Images

Bass is also facing calls to resign due to her disastrous handling of the fires.

Liberal journalist and Young Turks commentator Ana Kasparian pointed out the deception in Newsom's defense. They did cut the operational fire budget, she emphasized, while increasing the salary of existing firefighters. Those reductions, she added, cut into the maintenance of fire trucks, resulting in dozens of vehicles standing by useless and unable to be utilized against the fires. Fire Chief Crowley admitted to CNN that more than 100 fire "apparatus" were out of service. "Having these apparatus, and the proper amount of mechanics would have helped," she added. According to reporting from *Daily Mail*, the LAFD has a total of 183 trucks. That means more than half of the city's fire trucks were out of commission on January 7.

Less than a month before fires swept Los Angeles, a group of longtime firefighters gathered at City Hall to plead for more resources, including enough money to repair "million-dollar" fire trucks that were sitting idle. Those vehicles could have been pre-positioned around the neighborhoods days in advance since there was plenty of advance warning, Shellenberger said.

The firefighters who went to City Hall also said there were not enough firefighters to adequately fight fires in one of the most fire-prone cities. Freddy Escobar, president of the city's fire union and a veteran firefighter, reportedly said, "I'm going to say what people can't say. If we cut one position, if we close one station … the residents of Los Angeles are going to pay the ultimate sacrifice, and someone will die."

A CNN analysis of the 10 largest U.S. cities and other comparable departments shows the LAFD is less staffed than almost any other major city. The analysis showed that the LAFD has less than one firefighter for every 1,000 residents, whereas Chicago, Dallas, and Houston have two firefighters for the same number of residents.

Perhaps as a result of being understaffed, firefighters responded very late to the Palisades Fire. A video taken by the wife of Michael Valentine, a former U.S. attorney under Kamala Harris, and released by NewsNation shows that the LAFD took 45 minutes to respond to the Palisades Fire. Valentine said his wife called the fire department at 10:29 Tuesday morning. By 10:50, the video shows, the plume had become twice as large and still no firefighters were in the area. "Eight minutes later, the size of the fire seems to have doubled, yet again — still nobody fighting the fire," the video narrator says. At 11:13 a.m., a chopper appears in the video. But it's not until 11:23 that a helicopter begins dumping water on the fire. "But at this point, the fire is massive," the video narrator says.

Empty promises: The Santa Ynez Reservoir in the Palisades area was empty just when firefighters needed its 117 million gallons of water. Five days after the fires started, California Governor Gavin Newsom called for an investigation into its unavailability.

"It could have been confined," Valentine told NewsNation. "It wouldn't have touched any of the homes."

Reports of delayed responses are rampant. Jonathan Vigliotti posted a video on X of homes burning, with the caption, "It's been nearly TWO days since the Pacific Palisades fire started and still not enough fire fighters. No fire fighters on this burning home … with several homes threatened. I've never [seen] something like this so late in the game."

What Happened to the Water?

When the firefighters did arrive on the scene, some eventually ran into water-pressure problems and empty fire hydrants. The head of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power told media outlets their system water tanks went dry three times by the second day of fighting the fires. Reports of hydrants running dry spread like wildfire, prompting Newsom to respond. His early reaction was defensive. He scoffed at the audacity of people to believe any firefighting force could've been prepared to fight so many large fires all at once, a premise the legacy media was more than happy to get behind. But, as a whistleblower pointed out to Shellenberger, the Santa Ynez Reservoir was uphill from the Palisades Fire. The firefighters doing battle with it would likely have had first access to the reservoir's 117 million gallons of water before other firefighters below them. And that would likely have kept water pressure high.

To say that 117 million gallons of water wouldn't have made a difference is absurd. Someone must have pointed this out to Newsom, because by the end of the week — five days after the fire started — he had called for an independent investigation into the unavailability of the Santa Ynez Reservoir.

Will California Finally Learn?

For the longest time, California was a state where people sought opportunity and the good life. It was a place of great weather, great communities, and great jobs. It was the envy of all the other states and a haven for innovative thinkers, industrialists, and artists. But now it's become infested with homeless people who defecate on the sidewalks and openly abuse drugs. It's being ravaged by crime and razed by fires proving too much for fire departments run by lesbians.

The apocalyptic scale of the fires' devastation has at least one silver lining: Although the destructive nature of the environmental policies in California has been apparent for quite some time, especially to the 6.2 million people who moved out of the state between 2014 and 2023, this may be the straw to break the back of the proverbial camel.

Will something good come out of these fires? Will they shake Californians out of their hypnotic state? They must, if California is to reclaim its great heritage. Riva-Melissa Tez put it this way in *The Spectator World*:

> For nearly a decade, California has been trotting down a path of self-destruction, rejecting all affinity for competence in favor of ideological dogma. The results are catastrophic: planes crashing, industries faltering, many lives being ruined. It's a scenario eerily reminiscent of the dystopian world depicted in Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*. It's a book Californians love to dismiss as an unrealistic tale while they ironically live through a real-life adaption of its darkest and most violent scenes. A society in decline, crippled by the weight of its incompetence and beset on all sides by the consequences of its folly.
>
> It's time for Californians to shake off their complacency and demand a reckoning from those who are supposed to govern. For too long, we've tolerated a system that squanders our hard-earned wealth and is now destroying our property. The Romans built aqueducts stretching hundreds of miles in less time than it takes to permit an outbuilding in California — and their aqueducts actually held water. We deserve better — better stewardship of our finances and better management of our resources.
>
> The time for timid reform in which the government only gets bigger is over. Californians must rise and reclaim our Golden State from the deathly and devastating grip of endless bureaucratic cancer.

The Left is known for exploiting tragedies. They live by the mantra "never let a crisis go to waste." Perhaps patriots should do the same. As the ashes settle and the rebuilding begins, sane, clear-thinking, and patriotic Californians should make sure they're at the table, ready to present viable, Americanist solutions. There is no better time to propose time-tested solutions than after a blatant display of the failure of bad ones. Patriots and John Birch Society members, we urge you to not let this crisis go to waste. ■

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RECLAIM OUR CANAL!

President Trump says he'll take back the Panama Canal, but the Establishment media present the transfer to Panama as a done deal. Their fallacies can be fought with facts.

by William F. Jasper

Editor's note: With the inauguration of Donald Trump to his second term as president of the United States, the Panama Canal is once again at the forefront of Americans' geopolitical discussions. Trump believes giving up the canal was a bad idea for America, and wants to take it back. But is this possible, and is it even a good idea?

The following article, which has been cut for space, was originally published in the January 31, 2000 issue of The New American*. In its pages,* TNA *Senior Editor William F. Jasper lays out a series of facts to disprove the many fallacies often used as arguments as to why the Panama Canal could not and should not be reclaimed by the United States. We believe these facts are just as relevant now as they were 25 years ago. As the late Representative Helen Chenoweth-Hage (R-Idaho) said at the time, the issue of ownership of the canal "is far from over."*

Fallacy #1: *We can't break the treaties; we can't go back on our word.*

Honoring treaty obligations is a serious matter, which is precisely why the 1977 Carter-Torrijos Treaties must be repudiated. They are not legal, valid treaties. In his almost monomaniacal obsession with giving away the Canal, President Jimmy Carter engaged in massive deceptions that provided more than sufficient grounds for his impeachment. He, for instance, intentionally did not inform the Senate that the treaties it had ratified were entirely at odds with the final versions adopted by Panamanian Marxist dictator Omar Torrijos. In order for the treaties to be legal, it was necessary for President Carter to resubmit them to Congress to accept or reject Panama's changes. He did not do this. Instead, he hid from Congress the fact that changes had been made. Thus, the treaties were then, and are now, null and void on the most fundamental point of treaty law, namely, that both parties to a treaty must agree to the exact same document.

As treaty expert Dr. Charles H. Breecher pointed out in his Senate Judiciary Committee testimony in 1983,

> The Panama Canal treaties have not, I repeat, been ratified in international law, and they therefore did not go into effect on the 1st of October 1979, and are not in effect now.
>
> The reason is very simple. In their respective instruments of ratification, the United States and Panama did not agree to the same text of treaties.*

The Carter-Torrijos Treaties being null and void, we revert back to the still-valid 1903 Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty, under which we purchased the land and built the Canal, and were granted sovereignty over it *in perpetuity* — that is, forever!

President Carter admitted that the treaties could not have been ratified by the U.S. Senate without the DeConcini Reservation, which provided that the U.S. would have the *permanent* right, at its own discretion, to intervene militarily at any time that the Panama Canal may be endangered. Panama's Torrijos Reservation cancels DeConcini, asserting that any military intervention "will be effected in a manner consistent with the principles of mutual respect and cooperation." Meaning that U.S. intervention could only be carried out with Panama's permission. And if the Panamanian politicians, through corruption or coercion (or both), are in the pockets of China and/or the Colombian drug lords, how likely are we to receive their permission?

There are additional legal and constitutional grounds for challenging the treaties. It is a universally accepted principle of treaty law, for example, that a party to a treaty may terminate its treaty participa-

*To read Dr. Breecher's full testimony, and to learn what you can do to reclaim our canal, go to https://jbs.org/canal/.

tion and obligations if it determines that circumstances have changed substantially since the time when the agreement went into effect. The United States, like virtually every other country, has terminated treaties on this basis. As will be evident from information provided below, circumstances have changed substantially since 1978, when the Senate ratified the Carter-Torrijos Treaties. Even if those treaties *had been* legal and valid at one time, there could be no justification for continuing to adhere to them now.

Fallacy #2: *It's too late now; we've already exited the Canal. It's a "done deal."*

On December 31, 1999, President [Bill] Clinton went through with the illegal transfer of the Canal to Panama. It is true that by failing to deal with this issue and rectify matters before that date and before our troops were removed, Congress has allowed the situation to become much more politically sticky and complex. But it is not irreversible. Control and defense of the Panama Canal by the United States is not only an issue of legal right, but of national necessity. Red China — an aggressive, totalitarian, Communist power which considers the United States its "Number one enemy" — is accelerating its buildup in Panama. We only compound the danger to our security by denying this reality. Will we be in a better position to act if we wait until China has exercised its options on the U.S.-built, U.S.-owned military bases in the Canal Zone and can then operate from fortified positions? In November 1999, Representative Helen Chenoweth-Hage (R-ID) introduced House Joint Resolution 77, the Panama and America Security Act, which would declare the Carter-Torrijos Treaties null and void. Before Congress recessed for Christmas in November, Rep. Chenoweth-Hage had gathered 26 co-sponsors for the resolution. During the holiday break a number of additional House members indicated they too will sign on to the bill. This is not merely a "sense of Congress" resolution without authority, as are most resolutions. The joint resolution process is the common method by which treaties are terminated, as members of Congress can easily confirm by consulting their copies of Jefferson's Manual and Rules of the House of Representatives (pp. 300-301). The joint resolution is a legislative act with legal force. ...

Fallacy #4: *The defense requirements of the Panama Canal are fully provided for under the Carter-Torrijos Treaties.*

How so? Panama has no army, navy, or air force. It can not defend itself against even the terrorist armies of the drug cartels, let alone Red China. Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Thomas H. Moorer (Ret.) testified back in 1978 that the departure of U.S. forces from Panama would create a power vacuum that would be filled by another power. That is already happening, as Red China, by way of corporate surrogates, has moved into Panama. To the south, the FARC terrorists of Colombia are a major threat to Canal security. Unless the U.S. reasserts its rightful control over this strategic asset, Lieutenant General Gordon Sumner (Ret.) told *The New American* recently, "I think it is highly likely that we will see the Canal shut down before the year 2000 has ended."

General Sumner is a leading defense authority in this area whose warnings should not be ignored. As a former chairman of the Inter-American Defense Board, he held responsibility for overseeing the defense posture of all of the armed forces of the Western Hemisphere under the Rio Treaty, and over the past 20 years has closely monitored developments in Panama and Latin America.

The Carter-Torrijos Treaty advocates continue to assure us that the U.S. may send in military forces if the Canal is threatened. There are many problems with this argument, including: 1) We have no reason for confidence that Mr. Clinton and his political and media allies would admit to a "threat" to the Canal even if China should overtly move to take it over; 2) once the Canal has been sabotaged or destroyed, our military re-occupation will be of decidedly less value than if we had been on site to prevent such acts of sabotage and destruction; and 3) the sacrifice of American lives in trying to retake the Canal with the enemy bunkered in (U.S.-built) fortified positions will be very costly.

And, as we have already pointed out, the Panamanian government has rejected our asserted treaty right to militarily enter the Canal Zone without its permission. We can be sure that if the U.S. sends in forces against the wishes of the Panamanian politicians, we will see an eruption of condemnations from the Organization of American States, the United Nations, the European Union, and the U.S. and world press. Is it

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Surrender: President Jimmy Carter (center, applauding) gave up an economically and strategically important U.S. possession when he signed the Carter-Torrijos Treaties on June 16, 1978 (Panamanian dictator Omar Torrijos shown raising his hand). This began the process of handing over the Panama Canal to Panama.

AP Images

It's all yours: The Carter-Torrijos Treaties went into effect on December 31, 1999 when U.S. President Bill Clinton officially relinquished the Panama Canal. Clinton is shown here with Panamanian President Ernesto Pérez-Balladares in 1995.

likely that U.S. politicians will go against this orchestrated opposition at a crucial point in the future if they will not take a stand now when the costs would be much lower?

In addition to the above, it should be noted that under Panama Law No. 5, passed in 1997, Panama gave concessions on our military bases in the Canal Zone to a Red Chinese front company known as Hutchison Whampoa. This is a blatant violation of the Carter-Torrijos Treaties, which provide that *only* Panama may operate defensive sites in the Canal Zone. Thus, in addition to being null and void from the outset, the fraudulent 1977 treaties have now been abrogated by Panama in this important matter.

Fallacy #5: *What do you advocate: Sending troops into Panama; starting a war? That is not only immoral but will really set off anti-American riots, demonstrations, and denunciations around the world.*

Where were these "moralists" when President Clinton was sending thousands of troops to war in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and other far-flung reaches of the globe? They did not complain that thousands of refugees were killed and hundreds of thousands made homeless by our bombing campaigns.

Unlike these areas of U.S.-UN/U.S.-NATO military operations, the Panama Canal is clearly a national security interest of the United States. Also, unlike Bosnia, Kosovo, etc., we would not be "starting a war," since, as already mentioned, Panama does not have any armed forces, and a significant percentage of Panamanians would welcome the return of U.S. troops. In fact, some Panamanians are proposing that Panama petition the U.S. for "commonwealth" status similar to that of Puerto Rico.

Fallacy #6: *It is long past time that we get rid of this last vestige of American colonialism.*

The Panama Canal is no more a U.S. "colony" than is Alaska, Hawaii, or Puerto Rico. We paid for it — four times: We paid the government of Panama, the private property owners within the Canal Zone, and the French Canal company; and then we paid the extraordinary cost of building the Canal. We were not "renting" the Canal, as former President Jimmy Carter falsely claimed; we own it outright, as the U.S. Supreme Court has affirmed. We paid for it, we built it, we need it, it's ours, let's keep it.

Fallacy #7: *There is no evidence that the People's Republic of China (PRC) has any interests or presence in Panama.*

Concerning the very real threat posed to the U.S. and the entire Western Hemisphere by Red China in Panama, Admiral Thomas H. Moorer wrote this, in an article for *The New American* ("Save Our Canal!," August 2, 1999):

> The Chinese penetration of Panama has been effected primarily through an entity known as the Panama Ports Company, a front corporation for Hutchison-Whampoa Limited, a Communist Chinese-controlled company owned by Hong Kong billionaire Dr. Li Ka-shing. Dr. Li's business empire has long been intertwined with enterprises that front for the Communist military and intelligence arms of the People's Republic of China. Ten percent of his Panama Ports Company is owned by China Resources, the commercial arm of China's Ministry of Trade and Economic Cooperation.
>
> Two years ago, on July 16, 1997, Senator Fred Thompson (R-TN) was quoted in the *South China Morning Post* as stating that China Resources was "an agent of espionage — economic, military, and political — for China." Shen Jueren, the Communist official who heads China Resources, and Li Ka-shing are both partners in the Riady family's Hong Kong Chinese Bank. Dr. Li is also a principal in the PRC's huge China Telecom, and the China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC), a ministry-level conglomerate with global assets of $21 billion run by Chinese "princeling" Wang Jun. As chairman of Poly Group, Wang Jun also serves as the PRC's main arms dealer to Communist regimes, terrorists, and rogue states. Nevertheless, Shen Jueren and Wang Jun, like many other notorious Red Chinese agents bearing campaign gifts, were welcome guests at the Clinton-Gore White House.

President Clinton himself unintentionally confirmed the central point of Moorer's contention at a November 30, 1999 Oval Office press briefing. When asked by a reporter, "You're not worried about the Chinese controlling the Canal?" Mr. Clinton responded: "I think the Chinese will, in fact, be bending over backwards

to make sure that they run it in a competent and able and fair manner.... I would be very surprised if any adverse consequences flowed from the Chinese running the canal."

Los Angeles Times staff writer Norman Kempster reported the following day, December 1st, that "Clinton administration officials were aghast at the president's use of the phrase 'running the canal,' which picked up the rhetoric of Moorer and his allies." On December 9th, Mr. Clinton stated that his reference the previous week to China "running the canal" was a "misstatement."

Fallacy #8: *Hutchison Whampoa is merely a Hong Kong-based, private company, with no significant, or sinister, relation to the PRC.*

As sinologist Nicholas Eftimiades thoroughly demonstrated in his authoritative 1994 study*, Chinese Intelligence Operations* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press), accepting Chinese "business" at face value is unforgivably naive. All companies in the PRC are subservient adjuncts of the Communist Party and the Ministry of State Security (MSS), the Chinese equivalent of the KGB. This does not mean that all PRC companies are fronts for espionage and intelligence, but all *can be* pressed into such service. Eftimiades, a top China analyst at the Defense Intelligence Agency, notes:

> It appears that the most effective use of stealing foreign technology involves the use of recruited agents in Hong Kong. Examination of several public cases of attempted (and successful) thefts of high technology reveals a unique pattern of operation. The recruited agent establishes a front company in Hong Kong. The company may in fact carry on legitimate trading activities in addition to illegally purchasing and shipping technology.... The persistent use of Hong Kong as a transfer point is significant because it reveals a pattern of operation.

According to Eftimiades, Hutchison Whampoa partner China Resources is a prime example of the way MSS case officers "make extensive use of commercial covers." "For example," he notes, "a vice president of the China Resources Holding Company … in Hong Kong is traditionally a military case officer from Guangzhou. This officer coordinates the collection activities of other intelligence personnel operating under [China Resources] cover. The division maintains several other cover companies in Hong Kong and Macao as well."

The 1999 report of the House Select Committee on U.S. National Security and Military Commercial Concerns With the People's Republic of China (known as the Cox Report) noted that Hutchison partner CITIC, the China International Trust and Investment Corporation, has been involved in many illegal activities in the past involving U.S. national security. The Cox Report states:

> In 1996, Hong Kong Customs officials intercepted air-to-air missile parts being shipped by CATIC [China National Aero-Technology Import-Export Corporation], aboard a commercial air carrier, Dragonair. Dragonair is owned by China International Trade and Investment Company (CITIC), the most powerful and visible PRC-controlled conglomerate, and the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC).

The Cox Report also noted another CITIC-CATIC joint operation to acquire U.S. aircraft manufacturing technology and access to other aerospace firms through purchase of an interest in MAMCO Manufacturing, an aircraft parts manufacturer in Seattle.

In his "Save Our Canal" article in *The New American*, Admiral Moorer pointed out another highly unsavory association between Hutchison Whampoa and one of China's most dangerous assets. Moorer wrote:

> … Hutchison-Whampoa is a partner with the China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO), the merchant marine arm of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Hutchison-Whampoa also controls countless ports around the world. Because of its relationship to the PRC and the potential impact this implies for our global maritime interests, this should be of major concern to the United States. But my specific concern is that Beijing, operating through this company, has virtually achieved, without a single shot being fired, a stronghold on the Panama Canal, something which took our country so many years and such tremendous effort to accomplish.

"Although presented as a commercial entity," the House Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare has reported,

AP Images

Red-handed: Some Americans argued that former Hutchison Whampoa Chairman Li Ka-shing was merely a wealthy capitalist, and therefore allowing Hutchison Whampoa to run the Panama Canal's container terminals was no threat. However, Li has always had close ties to the Chinese Communist Party.

"COSCO is actually an arm of the Chinese military establishment." Hutchison Whampoa and COSCO work hand-in-glove throughout the world establishing a global network of ports and shipping lines that serve the military, intelligence, and commercial interests of the PRC.

Li Ka-shing, chairman of Hutchison Whampoa, sits on the board of the PRC-controlled CITIC, as well as other official, Red Chinese, state-run enterprises. ...

Fallacy #10: *Hutchison Whampoa will not be "running the Canal"; it merely has port facilities in the Canal Zone.*

In a December 9, 1999 press statement, President Clinton said: "The Hong Kong company which got the concession to operate the ports will be responsible for loading and unloading ships. They also do this in three or four ports in Britain. It's one of the biggest companies in the world. The manager is British. Most of the employees will be Panamanian." "I feel comfortable that our commercial and security interests can be protected under this arrangement," Mr. Clinton said. Apparently sharing his comfort, most of the media editorialists and commentators dutifully and uncritically regurgitated this pabulum.

As Admiral Moorer has repeatedly pointed out, Panama Law No. 5, passed by the Panamanian legislature on January 16, 1997, did far more than grant Hutchison Whampoa port concessions. This law, he noted, gives Hutchison Whampoa — and, therefore, China — exclusive concessions, including, among other things: "Control of the port of Balboa on the Pacific end of the canal and the port of Cristobal on the Atlantic end. In addition to these critical anchorages, Hutchison was granted a monopoly on the Pacific side with its takeover of Rodman Naval Base, a U.S.-built, deep-draft port facility capable of handling, supplying, refueling, and repairing just about any warship."...

Attorney Bruce Fein, testifying on behalf of the National Security Center before the Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing of October 22, 1999, noted the glaring conflict between Panama Law No. 5 and the Carter-Torrijos Treaties. Fein testified:

> Consider the plain and extraordinarily unambiguous words of Article V of the Neutrality Treaty: "After the termination of the Panama Canal Treaty, only the Republic of Panama shall operate the Canal and maintain military forces, defense sites, and military installations within its national territory." Article V thus forbids Panama from delegating or contracting the operation of the Canal to a third party. It further forbids a third party from maintaining "defense sites."

But Panama Law No. 5 apparently does precisely what Article V prohibits. As noted previously, Article 2.1 of the law grants a 25-year renewable operating concession to the Panama Ports Company. By no stretch of the imagination, however, can the Ports Company be said to be the alter ego of the Republic of Panama. Indeed, the Company is controlled by Hong Kong based Hutchison-Whampoa....

Thus, Panama Law No. 5 in effect transfers authority over the operation of the Canal substantially to the PRC, although the Treaty says "only the Republic of Panama shall operate the Canal." And on that count an additional worry is raised by Articles 2.10c and 2.12i of Law No. 5 which authorize the Ports Company to operate its own pilotage service. The former endows the Company with the "right to have and to operate, under separate concession by the National Port Authority, tug boats and work boats, vessel repair service and piloting service." Under the latter, the clients of the Ports Company may contract directly for pilots if dissatisfied with pilots designated by the National Port Authority or the successor to the Panama Canal Commission. Moreover, Article 2.12a of the law grants the Ports Company "the right to use on a priority basis all the piers" in the existing ports of Balboa and Cristobal.

AP Images

Essential: The importance of the Panama Canal to international shipping cannot be overstated. The canal underwent an expansion from 2007 to 2016, allowing more and larger ships to sail through. Here a Chinese COSCO container ship traverses part of the expansion in 2016.

Fallacy #11: *The Panama Canal Commission insists that it, not Hutchison Whampoa, will maintain control over scheduling of ships and piloting.*

That is a far from convincing assurance. The Commission members, like many of the other members of government appointed by former Panamanian President [Ernesto Pérez] Balladares, have been convincingly accused of rampant bribery and corruption. The PRC and Hutchison Whampoa reportedly won passage of Panama Law No. 5 with bucket loads of bribe money, and they are not likely to let up

on that practice. The fact is that the Commission has already backed down many times when push came to shove with Li's company. The Panama Canal Commission even caved in when Hutchison Whampoa refused to allow the Commission's Customs inspectors to inspect Hutchison's sealed containers.

One who knows well the tricky business of piloting ships through the Panama Canal's complex currents and tight quarters is Captain Kenneth P. Puckett, who, during his 15-year tenure on the Panama Canal, served as Senior Ship Pilot, Pilot Training Officer, and Canal Port Captain. In 1991, he received the Panama Canal Commission Outstanding Employee Award. In his December 8, 1999 testimony before a subcommittee of the House Banking Committee, Captain Puckett stated:

> Under Panama Law Number 5, the control of shipping, berthing and pilot assignments in the Ports of Panama will be granted to a private contractor. This contractor is the Hutchison Port Company, a Hong Kong based Chinese conglomerate. Consider for a moment this statement taken from an interview with President Dong of the Chinese shipping company COSCO as reported in the *Journal of Commerce* in August of 1998. In Mr. Dong's own words, "In order to satisfy our customers' needs, remain competitive, and preserve market share, COSCO must offer *confidential* contracts." If the Hutchison Port Company controls vessel scheduling and pilot assignments in the Ports of Panama, it stands to reason that they will give preferential service and insure priority transit scheduling to their customers. Remember that time is money, and there are a limited number of vessels that the Canal can accommodate on a daily basis. Any preferred scheduling practice will foster a bidding war among shipping agents, shipping companies, vessel owners and even countries, for that matter. Under such circumstances, how long will it be before the maritime industry worldwide loses confidence in the operations at the Panama Canal? What effect will all of this have on the strategic requirements of the U. S. military? Will our warships continue to be given priority transit scheduling or will they be required to wait in line just like any commercial vessel?

AP Images

China's canal: While China does not own the Panama Canal outright, it essentially controls the container terminals and benefits immensely from use of the passageway. Under Xi Jinping's rule, China and Panama have developed a much closer relationship. Here Xi is shown with then-Panamanian President Juan Carlos Varela in 2018.

Fallacy #12: *Concerning the potential for Hutchison Whampoa pilots to block the Canal or secretly to assemble caches of weapons at Hutchison's port properties, or to otherwise threaten the waterway, the* Wall Street Journal *asserted: "U.S. intelligence and military officials scoff at such fears."*

Officials and "experts" also scoffed at warnings of a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. There were also scoffers aplenty in the late 1950s and early 1960s when anti-Communists warned that Fidel Castro would turn Cuba into a Soviet base. No, the scoffers said, Castro is just a benevolent reformer. Then came the "Missile Crisis." Admiral Moorer and other authorities warn that in the same way Panama could be turned into a missile base by China. Common sense and precedent both repudiate the scoffers.

Fallacy #13: *The Red China threat has been grossly exaggerated. After all, Panama is more pro-Taiwan than we are; it has official relations with Taipei, not Beijing. And Taiwan has a larger port facility there than Hutchison Whampoa's.*

Unfortunately, Panama's situation vis-à-vis Taiwan and the PRC is almost certain to flip-flop, if we do nothing. The Bahamas also recognized Taiwan — until Hutchison Whampoa moved in and established a port facility. Then the Bahamas dumped Taiwan and embraced Red China.

In testimony before a subcommittee of the House Banking Committee on December 7, 1999, Professor Tomas A. Cabal of Panamanian University stated:

> The arrival in Panama of powerful Chinese companies has added a complex ingredient to the transfer of the Panama Canal.... Whatever the outcome from the presence of Hutchison Whampoa, the truth of the matter is that the People's Republic of China is rapidly filling the vacuum created by the departure of American military forces from the isthmus. Other Chinese companies such as The Great Wall of China, mentioned in the Cox Report, and COSCO are investing in Panama. Their presence adds to the danger of using the Colon Free Zone to purchase restricted technology with dual civilian military use. As reported by the *Miami Herald*, the Chinese are now operating two electronic eavesdropping stations in Cuba that allow their military forces to monitor U.S. communications. Chinese companies are investing in the modernization of the Panama Railroad and are actively seeking a contract to operate Howard Air Force Base. ... ■

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FOR TODAY
"A WELL REGULATED MILITIA, BEING NECESSARY TO THE SECURITY OF A FREE STATE, THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS, SHALL NOT BE INFRINGED."

by Joe Wolverton II, J.D.

Few rights are more essential to the preservation of liberty than the right to keep and bear arms. The Founding Fathers saw it as an inalienable, natural right — not a privilege granted by government. And yet, that right has been whittled away by a relentless series of unconstitutional laws, regulations, and judicial betrayals. If we are to remain a free people, we must restore the full breadth of our natural right to self-defense and resistance against oppression.

The right to bear arms is not conferred by the Second Amendment; rather, the amendment acknowledges and protects a preexisting right granted by God and inherent to all free men. It is the right of every individual to defend his life, liberty, and property. The Founders understood this truth well, having studied the works of Algernon Sidney, John Locke, and Montesquieu, all of whom recognized the inseparable connection between arms and liberty.

Indeed, James Madison, in *The Federalist*, No. 46, described an armed citizenry as the most effective check on a despotic government. He warned that if a government should become oppressive, the people would have no choice but to resist. Thomas Jefferson echoed this sentiment, famously writing that the tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. This was no endorsement of violence for its own sake, but an acknowledgment that without arms, the people would be powerless against those who would subjugate them.

The historical record is clear: Disarmed populations are vulnerable to enslavement and genocide. The Ottoman Empire, the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, Maoist China — all these regimes implemented civilian disarmament before unleashing horrific atrocities. The Founders, wise and studied men, foresaw such dangers and enshrined the right to bear arms within the Bill of Rights, ensuring that the government could never lawfully infringe upon it.

Despite the Second Amendment's explicit prohibition against infringement, courts and legislatures have spent the better part of the past century gutting this fundamental right. Through a labyrinthine web of gun-control measures — waiting periods, background checks, magazine restrictions, and outright bans — politicians have sought to chip away at the people's ability to defend themselves.

One of the most egregious examples of judicial usurpation came in *United States v. Miller* (1939), wherein the Supreme Court absurdly suggested that only "militia-related" arms were protected under the Second Amendment. This decision opened the floodgates for future encroachments, allowing states and the federal government to impose restrictions that would have been unthinkable to the Founders.

Even with the landmark rulings in *District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008) and *McDonald v. Chicago* (2010), which reaffirmed the individual right to bear arms, the courts have continued to allow infringements under the guise of "reasonable regulations." But a right that is licensed, regulated, or conditional is no right at all — it is a privilege, dispensed at the pleasure of the state.

The Founders knew that an armed populace was the last and best defense against tyranny. That is why they resisted British attempts to disarm them, sparking the first shots of the American Revolution.

Today, however, Americans are increasingly told that disarmament is a prerequisite for safety, that the government alone should wield the monopoly on force. The consequences of this mindset are dire. From red-flag laws that strip citizens of their weapons without due process to international agreements such as the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty, every step toward disarmament is a step toward subjugation. Once the people are disarmed, what recourse remains against an oppressive government?

To reclaim the full scope of our natural right to bear arms, Americans must take decisive action. First, we must reject every unconstitutional restriction and demand that our state legislatures nullify federal gun-control laws within their jurisdictions. The Constitution does not delegate to the federal government the authority to regulate firearms; therefore, such power remains with the states and the people.

Second, we must work to repeal existing gun laws that infringe on the right to keep and bear arms. Constitutional carry — allowing any law-abiding citizen to carry a firearm without government permission — should be the standard in all 50 states. Additionally, red-flag laws, "assault weapon" bans, and arbitrary magazine limits must be abolished.

Third, we must educate our fellow citizens on the true purpose of the Second Amendment. The corporate media and leftist academia have spent decades distorting history, painting gun ownership as a public hazard rather than the bulwark of liberty that it is. We must reclaim this narrative, teaching our children and communities the importance of an armed populace.

Finally, we must hold our elected officials accountable. Any politician who supports even the smallest encroachment on gun rights must be opposed with relentless political pressure and, if necessary, voted out of office. Liberty cannot be preserved through apathy — it must be defended with boldness and resolve.

We stand today at a crossroads. We can either continue to allow bureaucrats, judges, and anti-liberty politicians to strip away our rights piece by piece, or we can rise up and restore the full measure of the Second Amendment. The choice is clear: We must act now, or we may find ourselves asking, too late, why we failed to defend the freedom that was our birthright. ■

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Trump Takes Action

In a series of executive orders signed over the first few days of his second term in office, President Trump delivered on almost every promise he made to the American people. **(February 24, 2025) TNA250224**

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THE REVIEW

The Inside Story of January 6

by Rebecca Terrell

***One Question Remains: Your Move*,** by Kelly Meggs and Robert Morss, self-published, 2024, 197 pages, paperback.
***Fight, Fight, Fight!*,** by Kelly Meggs, self-published, 2024, 84 pages, paperback.

They have "lived a nightmare" since 2021, when their participation in the January 6 "Stop the Steal" rally in Washington, D.C., earned them unusually harsh prison sentences.

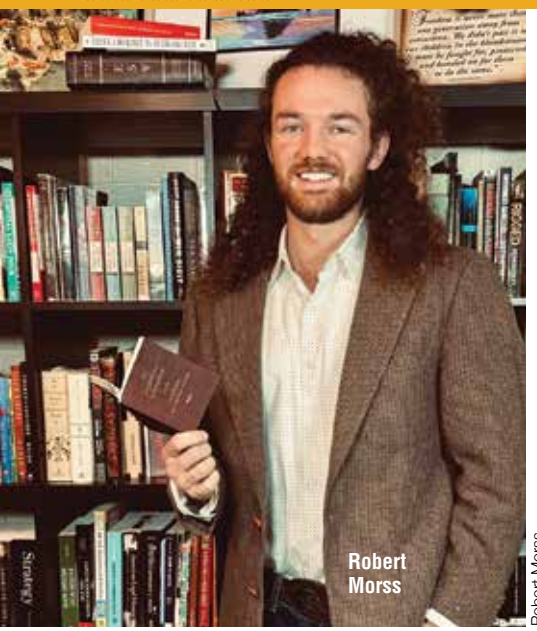
The lives of Kelly Meggs and Robert Morss intersected that day. They met in the D.C. jail where many other J6ers were held, like them, for lengthy periods without trial. However, *One Question Remains: Your Move* is the product of Meggs' and Morss' post-sentencing time as cellmates in Philadelphia's Federal Detention Center. Meggs calls his solo book *Fight, Fight, Fight!*, a sequel to *One Question Remains* inspired by the words that then-presidential candidate Donald Trump shouted to a MAGA crowd in Pennsylvania last July after an assassin's bullet grazed his ear. Meggs composed the second book from his cell in the federal prison in Memphis, Tennessee, where he served a third of his 12-year sentence before it was commuted by President Trump on January 21.

These books weave the tale of their personal tragedy amid a years-long and disgraceful miscarriage of justice that has devastated the lives of countless patriotic Americans and their families. Nevertheless, if you're looking for a sob story, you'll be disappointed. Meggs and Morss exude the same undaunted spirit that has become the hallmark of J6 defendants.

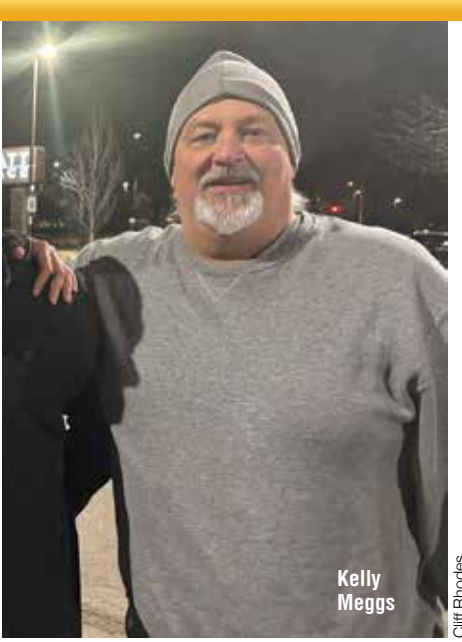
It's a characteristic noted by Don Neuen and former Fox

News anchor Donna Fiducia of Cowboy Logic on Real America's Voice News. *One Question Remains* features a foreword by these well-known conservative media commentators who have dedicated much of their programming over the past four years to being "a voice for the voiceless" of January 6. "And through it all, we noticed a very common thread running through almost every J6er and family member we interviewed: Love of God, Family and Country," they wrote. "Very few J6ers ever played the 'victim card' with us. Those incarcerated have remained positive, hopeful, courageous, and respectful despite being 'Still There.'"

Indeed, though their books explore the scale of devastation, Meggs and Morss also analyze the historical and political facets



Robert Morss



Cliff Rhodes

of January 6 from insiders' perspectives, awakening readers to the reality of the age-old adage "Freedom is not free."

Insurrectionists?

Prior to their arrests in politicized and heavy-handed pre-dawn raids characteristic of President Joe Biden's ironically named Justice Department, neither Meggs nor Morss had a criminal record. In fact, as head of Florida's Oath Keepers, Meggs was in Washington on January 5 and 6 to assist the Secret Service and D.C. Metro Police with security on Capitol Hill and at the White House. His arrest came in February 2021, and he was shuttled to what J6ers call the "patriot pod" of the "D.C. Gulag" (aka the Washington, D.C., jail). There, he spent more than 300 days in solitary confinement — without trial or bond — yet he still inspired his fellow captives in their nightly singing of the national anthem, a custom J6ers kept up in prisons across the country every evening before lockdown.

Meggs identifies himself as "Gator" in the first book. A small tattoo on his left wrist, "Gator1" indicates his role with Florida's Oath Keepers, and Gator is the moniker he brought with him to prison. Morss, on the other hand, learned of his nickname when he arrived at the patriot pod in the summer of 2021. He tells that story not in the book, but on his recently launched website AKATheLeggoMan.com. "I received a roaring hero's welcome," he remembers. "Everyone was excited to meet 'The Lego Man'!" He was flummoxed, wondering what the name meant. His compatriots quickly explained.

After FBI agents arrested Morss on June 11, 2021, they ransacked his apartment "searching for anything [with which] to vilify a man" with no criminal record, who served honorably as a U.S. Army Airborne Ranger and afterward worked as a respected high-school history teacher. The FBI raiders hit a bonanza, and agents publicly flaunted the damning evidence they seized in Morss' apartment after they had already carted him off in handcuffs: a Lego set of the U.S. Capitol. It was unopened.

The story skyrocketed Lego Man to fame among his peers — and infamy in the mainstream media as "The Architect of the Insurrection" — and the judge sentenced him to five and a half years.

The Inside Story

In their first book, the co-authors cover a gamut of topics, all related to governmental malfeasance working against Americans. Among chapter titles are "Hong Kong Fluey," "p(L)andemic," "… A well-funded cabal…," and "1512," a reference to the federal statute (18 U.S.C. §1512(c)(2)) that the U.S. Supreme Court later ruled was improperly applied to J6 defendants to exponentially augment their prison sentences. Though a vindication, that ruling provided no real relief since a re-sentencing could have worked against any given defendant at his judge's discretion.

Gator and Lego Man convincingly assert that J6 amounted to massive entrapment by the federal government of Americans, and they answer the more pressing question of why it happened. Bolstering their argument is a mountain of evidence that exonerates J6ers while incriminating the perpetrators — evidence that most J6 judges inexplicably refused to allow into their courtrooms.

The writers also ask compelling questions regarding more recent proofs revealed in CCTV footage from the Capitol on January 6, released by House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) beginning in late 2023. Why were photographers concealed in key positions throughout the Capitol? Why were agitators and instigators, marked by colored ribbons, seen coordinating crowd manipulation? Why did law-enforcement officers leave bags full of equipment in locations easily accessed by protesters? How did a certain individual dressed in MAGA clothing know how to open a panel in a wall inside the Capitol in which he stashed a metal barricade he had removed from a hallway?

These are just a few of many questions asked and answered throughout the book. Wishing it to be not just an historic account but also a launching pad for patriotic action in this country, Meggs and Morss save the final chapter for their most important query, which inspired the book's title. It is (spoiler alert): "What are you going to do?"

Meggs' sequel, *Fight, Fight, Fight!*, could be viewed as the answer to that question. He points out that only those willing to defend their country are worthy of the name "patriot." The battle over our borders, the war against globalism, and the fight for energy independence are among many existential matters he identifies. If we turn a blind eye now, he contends, we will assuredly cede our nation's freedom to tyranny.

Both books are written in a colloquial, easy-to-read style and are available at Amazon.com. Each was completed prior to the 2024 election, so some statements seem dated, though that does not detract from the overall message. Principally, readers can expect the pages to resound with resilience and fortitude in the face of unimaginable adversity. Don't be surprised if you are filled with righteous umbrage over the grossly unjust political warfare carried out against Americans just like you. The authors hope that indignation inspires you to action. ■

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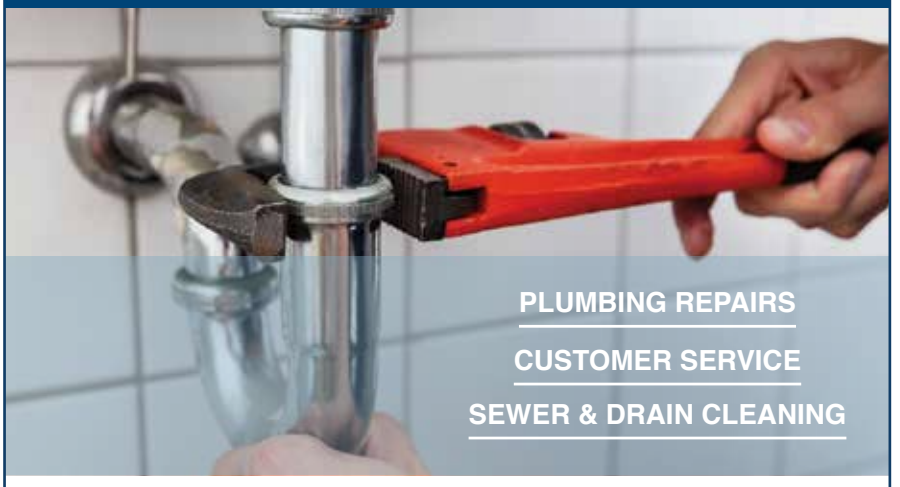

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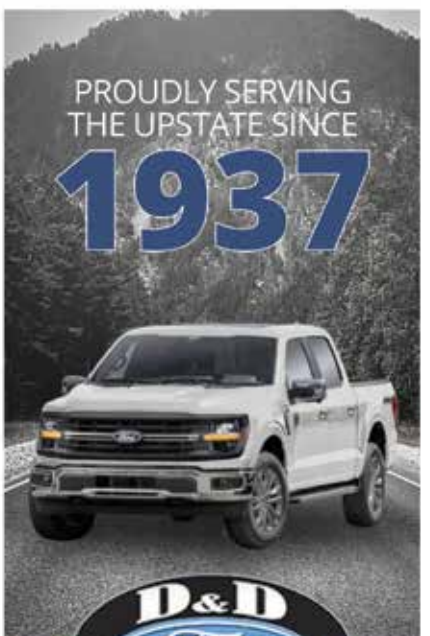

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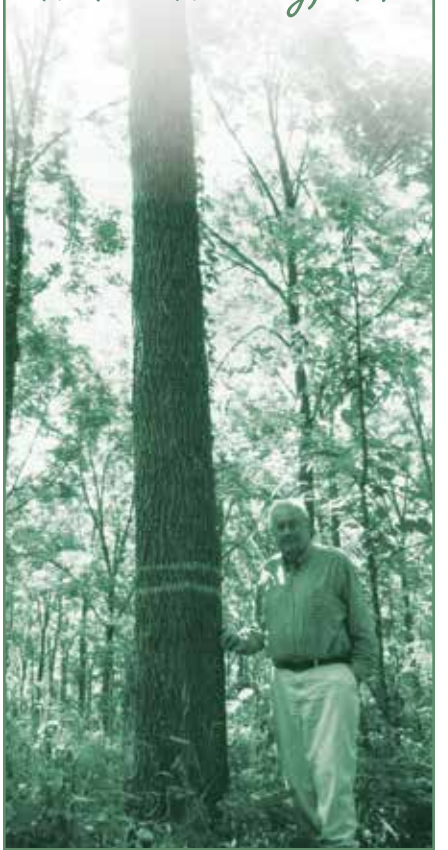

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THE LAST WORD

Freedom Isn't Free

by Rebecca Terrell

AP Images

At the dawn of the Trump administration, the United States witnessed an avalanche of pardons for political prisoners. First to emerge from behind bars were some 1,500 January 6 rallygoers, still labeled "insurrectionists" by mainstream media.

Shortly thereafter, Trump's signature cleared nearly two dozen more heroes incarcerated for blockading the gas chambers of our country — abortion mills. They included a wheelchair-bound, 90-year-old survivor of a communist concentration camp who years ago fled Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe. Among her comrades are Joan Bell and Paulette Harlow, both in their mid-70s and both sentenced to 24 months despite poor health; and Heather Idoni, a mom and diabetic who was denied her medication while incarcerated.

"Today is a day of celebration for life, justice and freedom," said pro-life activist Dr. Alveda King in a video posted on social media from the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., on January 24. Trump chose that day to reinstate the Mexico City Policy, which prevents U.S. funding of foreign agencies that promote infanticide.

Trump also revoked two of his predecessor's executive orders that violated the 1976 Hyde Amendment, a federal law that restricts taxpayer funding for both domestic and foreign abortion services. "Thank you, President Trump," Live Action founder Lila Rose wrote on X. "This order will save innocent lives!"

Conservatives are celebrating these and many other executive actions designed to overturn the former administration's despotic rule. The White House homepage boasts, "America Is Back."

Is it? For how long? If this is a free country, the political whims of the president should not hold such sway over our rights. It's obvious that if Kamala Harris had won last November, the landscape would be tragically different. The fact that we live in a country where this is reality should give us pause.

Nor should we think of the Biden administration as a one-off. Indeed, the first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln, imprisoned "dozens of opposition newspaper publishers" and "thousands of Northern citizens without trial for merely opposing his policies," according to Ludwig von Mises Institute President Thomas DiLorenzo in his 2002 book *The Real Lincoln*. The 16th president used "Federal troops to interfere with elections," suspended habeas corpus, confiscated firearms, and launched "a military invasion without the consent of Congress." He even deported "an opposition member of Congress, Clement L. Vallandigham," for opposing Lincoln's income-tax proposal.

But Honest Abe was not our first elected dictator. When our country was still in its infancy, Congress passed, and President and Founding Father John Adams signed into law, the infamous Sedition Act of 1798. In his book *What Kind of Nation*, New York Law School Dean Emeritus James Simon explains that proponents of the law claimed it was necessary to maintain national unity. But Adams' party, the Federalists, used it to suppress opposition and silence dissent, targeting Democratic-Republicans such as Thomas Jefferson. Many journalists, editors, and politicians were fined and imprisoned under the Sedition Act, and several newspapers were shut down.

American history is rife with similar examples, which reinforces the fact that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. The good news is that our Founders did, in fact, establish a country in which the rights of the minority should not yield to the majority, and protected her with a Bill of Rights that restrains the government, not the people. Congress is key to enforcing this restraint, no matter who occupies the White House. The John Birch Society equips Americans with the knowledge and tools needed to advocate for constitutional principles and to hold their elected officials accountable. To join, visit JBS.org. ■

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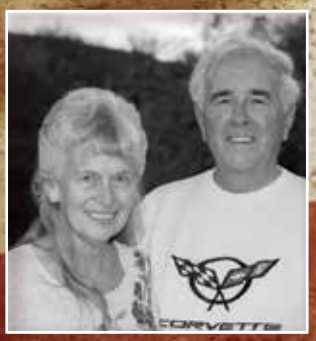

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